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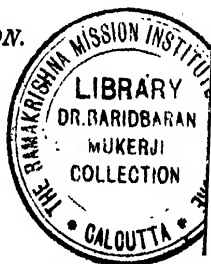


The Brāhmo Samaj.

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN'S ESSAYS: THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL.

THIRD EDITION.

PART I.



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PREFACE.

[FIRST EDITION.]

THESE essays were contributed to the "Indian Mirror," and are now reprinted in a collected form. It will be seen that no method has been attempted in their arrangement ; but it has been deemed proper to publish them almost in the order in which they originally appeared. Had time or circumstances permitted, it would have been possible to bring together more essays within the compass of this volume. But this is rendered unnecessary by the fact that the present work is only the first of a series which it is proposed to bring out from time to time. Some apology is due for the inevitable imperfections of the essays, which were intended for the columns of a newspaper, and were therefore evidently written in great haste. The compiler trusts, however, they will not prove uninteresting to the public, as revealing the spiritual experiences of an Indian Theist.

January 1874.

[SECOND EDITION.]

THE present series will contain all those essays and writings of Keshub Chunder Sen which either originally appeared in the newspapers or having been published in pamphlet forms, are now out of print. The first volume embraces the "Essays ; Theological

and Ethical" which was first published in 1874. The next part will, it is hoped, contain the Minister's articles on social and religious subjects contributed to the journals of his church and the popular tracts published in 1861. The compiler believes it will be possible within a short period to place all the writings and utterances of the Minister within the reach of the public.

January 1887.



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HARMONIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

THE natural growth of the body means the harmonious and healthy development of all its component parts. The same remark applies to the soul. It is only when there is abnormal growth that we meet with anomalies, discord and the disproportionate development of certain parts at the expense of others. There seem to be a principle of unity in the root of our life, both physical and spiritual, which gives vitality, strength, consistency and beauty to all the elements of our being simultaneously, so that when they grow they grow together. But when the body gets diseased the limbs, instead of preserving friendly relations towards each other, injure each other's health, and assume unnatural and unhealthy proportions. There is then discord between the heart and the lungs, the stomach and the brains, the nerves and the muscles. So when the soul is in an abnormal condition there is such disagreement among its various powers and sentiments, that instead of co-working for mutual development and common welfare, they seek to destroy or paralyze each other. Sometimes the intellect becomes too strong and tries to crush the tender feelings of the heart; a reaction follows, and surging emotions drown the impotent philosophy of the

understanding and reason. The will again, in its turn, seeks to resent the attacks of the intellect and the feelings, and leads to actions at once unreasonable and heartless. Such conflicts and anomalies are to be found more or less in all men. They indicate the unhealthy and abnormal condition of the soul. In a healthy state the intellectual powers, the feelings, and the will harmoniously develop themselves. In nature, the wise man can never be heartless ; nor the practical man unwise. In nature, impurity cannot abide with wisdom ; weakness and devotion cannot dwell together. In proportion to the culture of our intellect must be the growth of love and righteousness and the strength of our character. We are so constituted that no part of our spiritual nature can, in a normal condition, grow without effecting a corresponding improvement in all other parts of the system. The leaven of truth leaveneth the whole mass. Give the natural man faith, and it will imperceptibly raise the general tone of his character, enliven his feelings, exalt his aspirations, sweeten his devotion and strengthen his will. Should he grow in love he will inevitably grow in faith too ; should he become more earnest and strict in the discharge of his practical duties, he will necessarily become more prayerful and loving. Wisdom, love and purity are in their very nature and essence indissolubly united ; they dwell together, thrive together and if they perish they perish together. Should

it be found, as is generally the case in the world, that men who boast of theological wisdom have no heart, that those who are remarkably devout are not slow to adopt superstition and error, and that abundance of practical righteousness dries up the well of love in the heart, such wisdom, devotion and righteousness are by no means genuine ; they may be the results of our own labours, but are certainly not Divine gifts. In attempting to reform themselves men attain partial success ; they neglect one thing in attending to another ; they succeed in one thing and fail in another. Even when they seek to promote the harmonious development of their character by their own unaided exertions they fail through pride. But when we throw ourselves humbly and prayerfully at the Father's feet His grace works within us at the very root of our being, and gradually transforms our nature after the Divine image. There is a sort of reflection as it were of the light of God's nature in our lives ; His truth illumines our minds and gives us wisdom ; His love sweetens our hearts and quickens our love ; His holiness sanctifies our character. Thus in the natural course of development, wisdom, love and purity grow harmoniously in the human soul.

MARTHA AND MARY.

The story of Martha and Mary, narrated in the Gospel of Christ, is not only interesting in itself, but suggests valuable reflections of a

general character. The two sisters may be taken to represent two different classes of persons in the religious world. There are men of a practical order, earnest and diligent in the discharge of their varied duties, patient, persevering and circumspect, ever doing something, and in spite of inconveniences and privations ever serving their brethren and God. Like Martha they are "cumbered about much serving;" they are "careful and troubled about many things." On the other hand, we find men of a devout and spiritual character, concerned more with things inward than with things outward, anxious only about faith and trust in the Lord, and ever engaged in gathering the secret treasures of the spirit which perish not. They have like Mary found "the one thing needful;" they have "chosen that good part which shall not be taken away" from them. It is easy to understand why Jesus commended Mary and approved of her choice, for of the two she chose the better and more lasting part of religion. Martha seemed to congratulate herself as being the more faithful and active servant, but Jesus gently pointed out her self-deception; in attending to many things she had missed "the one thing needful." How many among professed Theists commit this error, and delude themselves in this manner! They seek outward virtues at the expense of inward faith and peace. They try to be faithful servants without the spirit of loyalty in their hearts. They are mind-

ful of duty, but have no devotion. Their hands are dutiful, but their hearts are not in the Lord. Amidst abundance of good works and "much serving" they miss the real secret and essence of goodness and service. Their hearts are poor and beggarly, though they are clad in the costly vestments of outward righteousness. What makes their case more distressing is the pride which invariably accompanies their religion of good works. They presume there is merit in such works, and that the greater the number of their activities and exercises in the sphere of outward duty the nearer they are to the kingdom of heaven. Such woful delusion we ought to break up. We should believe that the purest kind of virtue, the most rigid, self-sacrificing and comprehensive order of philanthropy has no merit in the sight of God apart from faith, and that there is no justification in works. A man may be a good father, husband, brother, citizen; he may be a reformer and a patriot: the world will glorify him and praise his virtues and his noble deeds; but his "much serving" will not avail to secure salvation in the absence of faith. It is not to be supposed, however, that we are commanded to abandon or ignore good works, and live in a state of contemplative quietism, of selfish mysticism. All that is meant is that we should not divide our heart among the endless diversities of good work, but seek with singleness of heart "the one thing needful," and all the rest will follow. We must cast out the pride

of duty, the arrogance of "much serving," and cherish the humble spirit of faith. We must dedicate ourselves altogether to the feet of the Lord, and He will make us what we ought to be. True faith is not barren, it must bear fruit. It must manifest itself in the form of domestic and social duty. It must seek delight in doing good. That is not faith which loves idleness, and refuses to serve God practically. His hands must ever serve the feet of the Lord whose heart is in the Lord. He who loves God and trusts in Him cannot but fulfil His commands with the utmost earnestness. His virtues are the spontaneous and natural issues of his faith. He does not go about doing this and that in his own wisdom and strength ; but it is Divine grace that evolves from his faith and prayers the fruits of outward righteousness, and moves and regulates the whole machinery of his active virtues. He worketh righteousness only as a willing but humble instrument in the hands of God. He would shun the best work as 'godless into which he cannot carry the spirit of living and loving faith. Nay he would feel his hands palsied and wholly incapacitated from doing such works, for his hands draw their strength from the fatness of the heart, and can move only when they are moved by the spirit of faith. On the other hand, he will go to perform with the utmost alacrity what the world may regard as the meanest and the most degrading work should it bear the impress of Divine bidding. This is

the spirit in which we should all labour in God's vineyard. Many of our Brahmo friends daily go to their respective offices, and tire out their energies by excessive labour ; and why ?—in order that with the profits of their labour they may supply the wants of their families and thus discharge the duties which they owe to them. But we ask them—do they feel comfort in such service ? Do they enjoy after the day's work is done, the approbation of conscience for the performance of a sacred duty ? Do they find that the more faithfully and energetically they labour the greater becomes their devotion to their Master ? Alas ! do they not on the contrary feel that it is the British Government, the railway company or the mercantile firm they serve and not God, and that in performing their daily work they find they are doing something foreign to their soul, and instead therefore of finding any comfort in it they heartily dislike it and would fain give it up as an obstacle to spiritual progress ? Why then this daily farce in the name of duty ? Why spend the largest portion of your time and energy in godless drudgery, which far from helping hampers the spirit. ? Why mortify the soul for the sake of money, or ostensibly for the discharge of hollow duties ? Again there are among us Brahmo reformers, school-masters, authors, managers of useful undertakings, preachers and missionaries, men who are in various ways seeking to do good to others. We would ask them whether they

labour contentedly and devoutly, whether they always carry the holy presence of God about them, and feel that in each instance it is His behest they carry out. Do they not often complain that their work maketh the heart dry, and that in proportion to their labour they do not feel themselves prayerful and loving towards God? Nay it sometimes happens that when they sit to pray after many hours' enthusiastic and self-sacrificing labour in a good cause, they find they cannot pray, work has so dried up their hearts. Against such godless though virtuous work we must warn the Brahmo community. It slowly and imperceptibly hardens the heart and induces unbelief and hypocrisy. It makes men Pharisees. Our Brahmo friends should be very careful about their so-called good works. Let them seek "the one thing needful," and faith will beget righteousness. Let them do every good work in the name and under the eye of the Lord. As the Upanishads say, whatever they do they should consecrate unto God.

TRUE PRAYER.

WHATEVER other deficiencies we may have, let us not be wanting in earnestness in our daily prayers, for it is in our prayers that we hope to find the antidote for all our sins and weaknesses. There are many who pray regularly every day, but they unfortunately do not realize the fruits of prayer in their life. Nay there are some who have been praying systematically for the last ten

years, and yet they complain that with all their prayers their evil habits have not been rectified, nor any of their spiritual wants supplied. Their devotion is little better than the repetition of stereotyped phrases, the dreary performance of a hard duty, whose termination alone is agreeable. So far have their prayers been inefficacious that they have been in the course of time led to doubt the importance and the necessity of prayer itself, and some have even been found to give it up eventually in a spirit of sceptical despondency. It is not difficult to account for this. Such men do not pray in the right spirit; they do not observe those conditions on which success invariably depends. It is not enough that we pray every day and are punctual church-goers; we must pray properly in order that we may receive what we pray for. It is not the length nor the number of our prayers but the true spirit of prayerful earnestness which ensures their successful issue. Prayer must be altogether real in order that its effects may be real. We should first endeavour to impress the heart with the supreme reality of Him to whom we address our supplications. Nothing is of so great importance to devotion as the realization of Divine Presence before and during prayer. Without a distinct consciousness of the presence of the Living Personal God before and within us, our prayers are apt to become empty appeals to the air, or the laboured soliloquies of the lonely dreamer. As soon as the mind is ushered into

this Sacred Presence, a peculiar thrill is naturally felt throughout the soul, and even the hairs of the body often stand on end. Being thus assured that the Great God is really near to hear us, we spontaneously open out the secrets of our troubled hearts, our wants and aspirations, our infirmities and maladies ; and all the time we feel that His all-seeing eye penetrates the depths of our minds, and sees every sin in its real colours. The communication being over we throw ourselves altogether upon His mercy and cling to His footstool as our only refuge. We earnestly and importunately implore Him to grant the suppliant's prayer, and look with anxious eyes towards Him that He may offer a benignant response. At last the glances of His loving eyes shed forth a flood of serene and pure light into our souls. The more we yield to this influence our prayer, which at first was a mere asking, rises into sweeter and deeper communion with God, till we are so completely charmed with the pleasant light of His company that the very thought of separation becomes painful. Every prayer must conclude with something actually obtained, and with the glad hope of obtaining greater and richer blessings in future. Such is natural prayer. Let us judge our daily prayers by such criterion, and satisfy ourselves that we do not address our words for an hour or two to empty space, but that we actually feel first the reality of our Father's presence, and then the sweetness and purity of His company. That is

true prayer which saves us from sin and sufferings and gives us purity and peace.

MAN AS A TEACHER.

The standard of purity may be described as a circle, the upper half of which is Divine, and the lower half human. We are taught to look up to God as the highest and truest standard of purity which we must ever strive to realize. "Be perfect." However sinful and degraded we may be, we must be guided by the great principle involved in this exhortation. The very idea of man aspiring to the perfection of the divinity may at first seem audacious and foolish as being an attempt at impossibilities. But closely considered the above text will be found to contain the wisdom of ages, as it teaches us to turn away from the inadequate and demeaning examples of human character, and direct the aspirations and energies of the immortal soul* towards the Infinite and Perfect God. We cannot, however, do away with man's teaching and guidance. The help of the elder brethren of the human family has in all countries and ages been considered indispensable to the progress of the younger members, and therefore invariably sought and availed of by the latter for the benefit of their souls. Not only has their superior wisdom exalted them to the position of teachers, but what is of more importance, their purer lives have been universally re-

cognised as patterns of character for our imitation and guidance. How then are these two principles to be reconciled? How are we to accept both God and man as the standard of excellence? The very same religion which tells men to be perfect even as God is perfect, points to Christ as "the way." There must be a deep meaning in this—a real unity beneath this seeming contradiction. The fact, as we understand it, is this. Though thousands believe that God alone is absolutely holy, and that whenever they seek holiness they must look up to Him as their standard, yet in endeavouring to serve Him they feel the need of a lower standard which, if followed, may guide them to Him? and hence is it that they have recourse to man. What holiness is in itself we see in God, though dimly, according to our weak vision. But how we are to become holy servants of God we try to learn from the personal character of good and righteous men. We worship God as the Supreme Master, the Kind Father, the Righteous Governor. We revere good and great men as obedient servants, dutiful children and loyal subjects. We cannot expect to find in the Divinity an example of the way in which He is to be served; so we can never without being guilty of idolatry bow before man as the perfect standard of holiness. Man, however righteous his character may be, and however exalted above ordinary men, can commend himself to us only as exemplifying the character of an *obedient servant*, and can

never be identified with God, who stands before us as the One Only *Master*, full of perfect holiness. Thus in Theism the indisputable sovereignty and unity of God as the Holy Master is acknowledged, and the proper functions of man as a helper in His service are recognised, while man-worship is rendered impossible. Hence in revering Christ as the 'way' to God the Theists only show their appreciation of the spirit of one who lived to "do the will" of his Father, and who has taught us by his personal example how we may do the like. They honour his memory not because he shows,—for he cannot show,—what the Father is, but how the 'son' ought to be dutiful and obedient to the Father. The son is needful only as exhibiting the lower half of the circle of righteousness, which is obedience. The Father alone shows the upper half—purity as it is, and as it can exist only in God.

DIVINE MERCY AND HOLINESS.

THE Divine nature is a beautiful and consistent unity. But when we reflect on that nature we do so analytically. We think of the power of God, His wisdom, His mercy, His holiness separately, in order that we may have a clear apprehension of each. In conception we again combine these attributes synthetically, and try to realize God as a Person possessed of these attributes. Such conception of the Divine nature must be false and delusive and even

injurious to the interests of the soul, if we omit or underrate any of the above attributes. We must carefully guard ourselves against this evil. In prayer and meditation we must feel the Real God as He is, and be satisfied that we have not imagined or argued away any of His attributes. There are many who instead of adoring the true God offer their homage and prayers to a being whom they imagine to be God, and who best answers to their ideas and wishes. They virtually worship an ideal projection of their own minds, and by ascribing to the imagined deity whatever attributes they wish it to possess they actually follow their own whims while professing to follow their deity. False theology often produces errors in religion and even in morality. There are men who think of God's mercy apart from His holiness to such an extent as almost to ignore the latter ; while others there are who on the contrary take such one-sided view of His holiness as almost to forget that He is merciful. Nay the same man may entertain these partial and contrary views of the Divine nature at different times. The practical consequences of such theological one-sidedness are often deplorable, and become seriously hurtful when they assume a definite shape. He who reflects too much on God's mercy to the exclusion of holiness prays fervently, hopes sanguinely and communes with God joyfully ; but at the same time he thinks very little of his sins, does not care to part with his old habits of vice or fortify

his soul against its further encroachments, hates repentance as a disease, and shuns all gloomy thoughts. He, on the other hand, who looks almost exclusively to Divine holiness feels more and more by contrast the wretchedness of his own soul, finds hardly any cause of rejoicing, learns to be humble and God-fearing ; but becomes gradually hopeless of reconciliation with the All-holy, and may ultimately pronounce himself irreclaimable. Thus there is great danger in either case ; and though there is too much joy on the one hand and too much sorrow on the other, both produce eventually the same evils,—they afford encouragement to sin and slacken our efforts after the attainment of purity. By taking advantage, as it were, of God's mercy, or of our own weakness and frailties, we neglect our sins. By believing either that God is too merciful to punish our sins, which are only improprieties in His indulgent view, or that our nature is too wicked to be purified, we naturally cling to our vicious habits and become indifferent to the purification of our hearts. Then does the soul attain harmony when by an adequate conception of God's mercy and holiness it blends rejoicings and repentance. In true prayer and communion, the presence of the Father of infinite mercy infuses joy and hope into our hearts, while that of the Holy God teaches us humility and purity ; the former serves as a safe-guard against despair and scepticism, the latter against pride and impurity.

Let us not then imagine a deity possessed only of infinite mercy or absolute holiness, but worship the Real God who is infinite both in mercy and holiness.

THE PROPHET OF NUDDEA.

To the Brahmo Somaj must India be ever indebted for the vindication and revival of the spirit of Chaitanya, and the true appreciation of his creed and character. The short period of four centuries has seen the rise and decay of that important and interesting branch of the Hindu Church which he founded, and which, though now in a degenerate condition, has done wonders in its days, and will, if revived and reformed, yet render valuable services to the cause of Indian regeneration. While we sincerely regret that his spirit has so soon passed away from the vast majority of his followers, leaving them in a most abject condition of formalism and even immorality, we cannot but speak with the utmost reverence and gratitude of him who achieved some of the highest religious and social reforms in Hindu society, and whose true-hearted disciples are an honor to Hindustan. That the great prophet of Nuddea should be ridiculed, hated and traduced by those who look to the surface of his movement is not to be wondered at. Fancy a promiscuous gathering of various castes, chiefly of the lower orders, enthusiastically dancing and whir-

ling round, chanting common-place hymns set in low popular tunes, and now and then fervently crying aloud "Haribol." Such a spectacle is disgusting and even ludicrous in the eyes of educated men, and revolting to enlightened ideas and tastes. And there are many who have not the patience to hear any argument in justification of a creed which tolerates such things. We can very well understand the aversion of such superficial observers to Chaitanyaism. But those "who seek for pearls must dive below." A careful analysis will show that this system of faith involves certain valuable principles, which far from exciting ridicule, challenge the respect of even the best among us, being of the highest importance to our salvation and to the social reformation of our country. Chaitanya proscribed caste, and boldly preached the equality of Brahmin and Sudra ; he protested against the merit of work and wisdom, and told his followers that salvation cometh by grace ; he denounced worldiness and taught faith and resignation. These three principles constitute the corner stone of his creed—the equality of all castes before God, salvation through grace, and faith or *Bhakti*. The best and boldest illustration of the first of these doctrines is to be found in the fact that one of the most devoted of Chaitanya's disciples was a Mahomedan convert named Haridas, whose memory is highly revered even by the Hindus of the present day without any scruple whatsoever. It is hardly

less note-worthy that among Chaitanya's followers the highest Brahmin and the lowest Sudra or Chandal, join in adoring their deity, and even in many cases dine together and intermarry. What more do our most advanced reformers of the present day wish? Do we not see here an attempt to level caste distinctions, and construct a spiritual and social brotherhood such as our most enlightened ideas lead us to wish? And when we consider that such an attempt was made by an orthodox Hindu, brought up amidst the grossest traditions of caste and in the dark ages of Brahminical ascendancy, we cannot sufficiently admire and revere him. But his crusade against caste would appear insignificant when compared with the far higher battle he fought with the pride of intellect and the pride of works. He found the true spirit of religion had been almost stamped out under the crushing weight of theological formularies on the one hand and outward ceremonials on the other. Men were arrogantly seeking to save themselves by means of their theological erudition; or were trying to purchase redemption with the merit of pious actions and pompous ceremonies. Chaitanya dispelled this delusion, and emphatically taught that nothing could save sinners except the almighty name of God and His all-conquering grace. Hence the pre-eminent importance his followers attach to the Divine Name, and the "ocean of joy" which the best among them feel in that sweet name. Nay none is reckoned his true disciple un-

less the very utterance of that name drives away his sin and inundates his heart with heavenly felicity. Lastly, our countrymen owe to him the highest ideas of simplicity, resignation and trust, which no other Hindu reformer taught so well by precept or example. His followers have learnt to repose their firmest faith in God and resign the morrow into the hands of Providence. They discard worldly luxuries, rigidly abstain from meat and wine, live on the bare necessities of life, and think it honorable to depend upon charity if they could thereby dedicate their life to God. Such are the leading principles of Chaitanyaism. However much they may have been abused in the course of time, they are noble in themselves, and make the nearest approach to the ethics of Jesus of Nazareth. It is our conviction that should India fully accept and act upon these principles, she will unconsciously imbibe the regenerating spirit of the Gospel, and in a national manner realize the "Kingdom of Heaven."

REPENTANCE AND JOY.

IF Theism be, as we have often observed, the religion of harmony, it must neither incline to despondency and melancholy on the one hand nor rapture and ecstasy on the other. It is the religion of patience and peace ; it unites wholesome sorrow with joy. Many there are who are not alive to the enormity of sin, and

regard it as nothing more than a slip, a mistake, an imperfection ; they obliterate from their theology what we call " horrid iniquity." Though depraved they sport wantonly with their vices, and, in spite of these, enjoy raptures in devotion. According to them religion is nothing but perpetual happiness, and their fancy creates an elysium into which their hearts soar during communion and contemplation, revelling in the highest flights of imagined felicity. Self-destroying Neroes, they fiddle and make themselves merry while their souls burn in a terrible conflagration of sin. There are, on the other hand, men who are ever and anon tormenting themselves with reminiscences of their past sins, and with exaggerated and painful ideas of their own abasement. Sinful as they are, they seem to argue, their religion can only mean sackcloth and mourning. They magnify their sin into a gigantic monster which haunts them day and night, takes away their cheerfulness and comfort, and so depresses their spirits as to bring about ultimately a settled state of utter despair and self-mortification. In neither of these two classes of men do we find the true spirit of faith. The Theist deals with realities, not with fancies ; he neither dwells in an imaginary heaven nor in an imaginary hell. He sees there is actual sin in his heart, and he feels sorrow and repentance for it. Nay repentance comes to him naturally, as uneasiness follows bodily distemper. He cannot ignore it. He cannot will

it away, much less rejoice in sin. But such penitence is proportionate to the acuteness of the spiritual malady which induces it. In the natural state of the mind it can neither be too little nor too much. The fact is that the mortifying feelings of self-condemnation consequent on the violation of God's law are, like other emotions, not dependent upon our will ; they do not rise or disappear, increase or decrease in poignancy at our fiat. We feel them in their due measure, because compelled to do so under the law of nature. Thus the soul in a normal condition is prevented from reducing its sin through imagination to the zero point, and also magnifying it into horrid proportions. The sinner may feel depressed, but he cannot sink into absolute and hopeless depression. Such a depression is prevented by a consciousness of the fair side of his life. If he feels there is evil in him, he cannot but feel on the other hand there is something good in him ; and if sorrow is, as a consequence, inevitable, joy too is inevitable. Neither purity nor impurity is absolute in humanity. However wicked man may be, there must yet be some goodness within him. If there is in our biography much to deplore and repent for, there is also some matter for self-gratulation and thanksgivings to God. Though we are prone to evil, through Divine mercy we have now and then been saved from sin and sorrow and enabled to attain purity. We have often been thrown away from His presence

by our conscious rebellion against His authority ; but now and then humbly have we knelt beneath His foot-stool, and enjoyed the sweet, invigorating and purifying influence of His presence and of conscious communion with Him. "Such facts gladden us not only when we realize them but also as often as we recollect them. God's mercy unto us, great sinners though we are, is an undoubted fact ; and this mercy is manifested as well in guarding us against sin as in conferring positive spiritual blessings upon us. All such merciful dispensations comfort and cheer us, and the more so by their contrast with the surrounding black spots with which we have defiled our hearts. In short as we feel mortified at the sins we have committed, we rejoice in the rays of light, purity and love which Divine grace has shed upon us from time to time. Such rejoicings are natural, and when natural cannot degenerate into the dreamer's visionary ecstasies or the mystic's nervous excitement or the wanton merriment of the unconscious sinner. They cannot overstep legitimate bounds so long as they are based upon and arise from actual facts of our life we shall find reasons both for sorrow and joy. And as we grow in purity our sorrows shall decrease and our joys shall increase proportionately.

THE LAW OF FORGIVENESS.

IF forgery is counted a most heinous crime in earthly tribunals, to forge divine documents must be awfully iniquitous. And yet not a few there are who systematically commit this sin. Thousands, nay tens of thousands of all creeds use as genuine Divine law a counterfeit ethical code forged by themselves, and while pretending to follow Heaven's behests actually carry out the wishes of their own carnal hearts. The fact is that pure and unmixed truth as it is in God can hardly secure currency in this world's market and is therefore mixed with base metal. Men find it so difficult to obey God's law in its integrity and fullness, that they think it indispensable to curtail and modify it, so as to bring it down to the level of their own limited capacities, and adapt it in every way to their weaknesses and difficulties. But they do not stop here. They not only hold that this mutilation of Divine law is necessary to suit human convenience, but that it is intended and sanctioned by God. Frail and weak as man is, and surrounded by trials and temptations too strong for him to resist, God in the plenitude of His wisdom and mercy has decided that it is not obligatory on him to obey the whole of His law, but that he may fulfil it as far as he is able and willing! Thus although it is universally acknowledged that the primary 'statute law' of heaven enjoins absolute veracity, honesty, benevolence,

devotion and faith, yet according to the 'common law' prevalent for ages among mankind, and said to be tacitly sanctioned by Him, men may lie now and then, be a little dishonest, do a small act of cruelty to others, be somewhat idle and careless in prayer and even cherish sceptical views, under the pressure of trials and difficulties. Thus God's truth is dead letter ; man's mixture of truth and lie, purity and impurity is what practically governs the affairs of society. We propose to apply these remarks to the subject of the present essay. It is theoretically believed on the one hand that we should be absolutely meek and forgiving, that we ought to turn the right cheek when the left is struck, return good for evil, bless them that curse us and pray for them that spitefully use us. But this beautiful and high-sounding theory is set aside in the actual concerns of life ; and men act and live under the conviction that it is necessary and intended by God that they should now and then, under the impulses of anger and resentment, return blow for blow. If they are vindictive, they do not even confess that they are wrong, much less penitently adopt measures of reformation. On the contrary they proudly seek to defend their conduct, and hold retaliation to be justifiable. It is argued that if every man were to submit meekly to all the insults and oppressions to which he might be subjected, and forgive his enemy repeatedly, human society would be ruined, and wrong-doers would carry on their op-

pressions with impunity. Hence anger and resentment are said to be necessary for the safety and welfare of society, and not repugnant to God's will ! Nay the meek and forgiving are ridiculed and maligned as timid and weak-hearted men. The word Lamb which denotes gentle Christ, is in this world of wolves synonymous with cowardice. "An eye for an eye," recrimination and retaliation, revilings and slander, these constitute manliness. The sooner one overpowers his enemy the more honorable he is. The more he pities and forgives his foe the more contemptible and mean he is. As if true manhood consists in the gratification of the passions of anger and vindictiveness ! We abhor this base accommodation of divine law to the promptings of the flesh. We deem it iniquitous to fashion a maxim after our own interests and wishes, and then pass it off as divine. If we cannot control our anger and are driven into vindictive retaliation by carnal excitement, shall we seek to justify it by falsely pleading God's approval of it ? Shall we instead of confessing our own imperfections and impurity impute the same to the sacred law of heaven ? No : let this impious fraud and forgery be put down. Let us acknowledge our guilt, and vindicate the purity of God's law. The law of meekness and forgiveness is absolute like all other ethical laws ; if it is to be obeyed, it must be accepted in its integrity. "Seventy times seven" is no arithmetical limit to the unlimited scope of true forgiveness ; seven

hundred and seventy times seven would be as inadequate to represent it. We must forgive as often as we are abused and insulted, without limit or reservation. In other words, the heart must be wholly and constantly meek in spite of repeated causes of irritation. Our anger must be so far subdued that our very nature may be converted into that of a lamb. True meekness cannot, however sorely it may be tried, give up its lamb-like nature, but is in all circumstances gentle, mild and forgiving,—ever softly serene as the moon. God requires of us absolute meekness, forgiveness unto perfection ; not mere sentimentalism or mildness of temper, not temporary reconciliation, not mere kindness towards the weaknesses of friends. He commands us to be forbearing and forgiving towards our worst foes, and under the most trying provocation. He demands of us not only cessation of anger but positive love and kindness towards even our oppressors and enemies. Such is the high standard of meekness by which we ought to be guided. It is absurd and blasphemous to talk of the All-holy giving His sanction to all those outrages and assaults which our vindictiveness gives rise to. He has implanted in us feelings of anger and indignation for the purpose of protecting others from wrongs and oppressions, and upholding the cause of truth and humanity, not of avenging personal wrongs inflicted on ourselves. We must feel indignation when we see the innocent, the weak, the poor and the

helpless unjustly harassed and tortured, the virtuous maligned and persecuted, the innocent punished or public good wantonly sacrificed; for under such an impulse we are incited to help the injured cause with fitting zeal. To remain callous and not to feel indignation in such circumstances, would be unnatural and immoral. But we have no right to convert those passions which are only meant to be safeguards of public good into personal vindictiveness and revenge. We can never resent wrongs on our own account. We may do all to defend ourselves from assault and oppression; but against the most inveterate foe we should not, we dare not lift the voice of malice or the hand of vengeance. If we are maltreated in the worst manner, slandered, beaten and robbed, we should seek redress and protection, but not revenge. We should forgive our worst foes, and pray that the Father may have mercy on them.

OUR RESTING PLACE.

THERE are many among us who are searching after a resting place. They may have attained a large measure of purity, in doctrine, devotion and deeds; but their varying habits and dispositions and tendencies, and the constant fluctuations in their religious life, both inward and outward, show that they have not found rest or peace. Drifted to and fro by trials and struggles, doubt and despondency, they seem

to be seeking a place where they may find rest. Until such a resting place is found no Brahmo should consider himself safe. There is no security even in abundant righteousness ; even the best among us may turn out unbelievers to-morrow. For of what avail is a house with unspeakable riches inside, and apparently strong, well-built and beautiful, which has no foundation ? It is of the utmost importance, therefore, to fix the roots of our faith and piety in a rock, that we may stand firm and unshaken amidst the trials of life and enjoy peace undisturbed. But where is that resting place ? Not in ceremonies or doctrines ; not in our wisdom or actions ; not in our imagination or emotions ; not in external objects however sublime or prophets however pious and holy. No, neither in any thing in ourselves nor in any thing outward ; but in the footstool of the Merciful Lord. There alone must we seek, there alone can we hope to find true peace. All else is treacherous and delusive. Beautiful objects and plausible theories may satisfy our imagination, but they deceive and disappoint us if we wholly trust them. But though often deceived we still pursue the profitless game, and try the deceitful experiment once more, till we come at last to the true resting place—God's infinite mercy. When we have reposed our firm faith in that, our doubts and wanderings cease, and our troubled hearts rejoice in the prospect and possession of peace. Let us all with unwavering hearts rely on

God's emphatic promise made unto each of us in the recesses of our hearts—*I will give you peace*. This promise shall be redeemed in the case of each of us, however unworthy we may be. This is at once our hope and comfort, our life and strength, our resting place amidst the fluctuations of the world. There is nothing else which we can depend upon with absolute confidence. The least failure unnerves and discourages us; the smallest speck of cloud in the spiritual horizon excites serious apprehensions; the occasional lapses of good men tell us we too may prove wanting in the hour of trial; our own experiences of the endless ups and downs of life make us fear our highest flights may be succeeded by an ignominious fall. To-day we are prayerful and virtuous; but to-morrow perchance the worst form of wickedness will overtake us. Thus there is certainty of rest neither in possession nor in anticipation so long as we depend upon ourselves. Nay sometimes men are even led to conclude*that it is circumstances which make and unmake piety, so that religious pursuits are an altogether uncertain game, and our virtues but splendid visions. Amidst the ceaseless vicissitudes, struggles and uncertainties of our spiritual life, and in the face of threatening passions and lusts what is it that can keep us steady and assure us of salvation? In this land of sin and death where can we find assurance that we shall live and not die? In the vast sea of disasters where is the rock to which the sin-

ner may cling for life and eternity? When the whole world preaches in varied forms sermons of despair is there no gospel of hope? Yes: sinner, listen, thy Father saith—“*I will give you rest.*” It is no uncertain language. The Father’s holiness and love preclude the possibility of any thing like deception or fraud. That He saith that He doeth surely. The above words are a Promissory Note, indelibly impressed on the human heart in God’s own handwriting, which shall be redeemed in the fullness of time. The treasure therein guaranteed is as good as when actually in hand. The direst revolutions may occur, the sun and the stars may pass away, but not one iota of God’s promise shall remain unfulfilled. Whoever hath received the promise shall assuredly find the treasure—peace here and hereafter. In the money market of this world we put our faith in the frail promissory notes of man as if they were cash; and daily we carry on our transactions with confidence. Blessed are they who put absolute trust in the promise of the All-holy and find rest and peace therein; who not only rejoice in the hope of its fulfilment, but regard the promise itself as actual treasure! If then the Holy Father has made unto us an emphatic promise that He will give us rest, let us fling away all unholy fear and despondency, and with hope and patience lie waiting at His feet. Let the world frighten us, let difficulties and trials beset us; yet let us

remain firm and unmoved, and rest assured of eternal life and peace everlasting, for the Father hath promised unto us these things.

— 4, 135

BEWARE OF TRIALS.

As in the physical world, so in our spiritual life there are such things as ebb and flow, day and night. There are times when men enjoy spiritual prosperity, when they can pray profitably and pleasantly, and live righteously, and when all outward circumstances also prove favorable to their wishes. At other times spiritual energies, joys and even hopes seem to ebb away, and discouragements, disappointments, trials and temptations continually trouble and mortify the spirit. These are bad days for the soul, and it requires great strength to meet them and pass through them unscathed. None should neglect such seasons of trial when they come. None should arrogantly imagine that his present spiritual prosperity is guaranteed to endure everlastingly and is above the possibility of depression. For then his heart unfortified would easily fall a prey to dangers which it was not prepared to encounter. True wisdom counsels us to be always prepared for the worst. It ought to be borne in mind that our character depends greatly upon the trials which now and then beset us, and that it is these which determine our future career. Not to be able to stand against them when they come is

often the beginning of a downward course of ever increasing unbelief and vice. How many men, once so good and prayerful, have slipped off the path of purity and sunk in the mire of immorality for once failing to stand in the day of trial ! How often has one such lapse resulted in a series of recurring and almost inevitable failings bringing down the most mighty and the least suspected to utter ruin ! How many of our friends, proudly and gaily sailing under the sun on the smooth sea of a pious life, have been suddenly overtaken by a dismal and stormy night, and completely wrecked ! Such examples ought to teach us to prepare ourselves for the occasional reverses and trials of life, to lay up provisions for the evil day. Let the best of men remember that their spiritual resources and health and strength may be taken away by temptations never even dreamt of, and that they should therefore be always prepared to encounter such contingencies. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Our success in trial depends mainly upon our preparedness. Our best exertions during trial often fail and prove inadequate, and only they win the battle who were previously trained and disciplined for it. Sin often comes upon us like fever; and the best antidote has been found to be strengthening and purifying the system during remission or before the disease is expected to come ; for when it has come, the system being unprepared, is hardly able to withstand its attack and readily

succumbs to it. We would therefore recommend all our friends who think they stand to take heed lest they fall. If they feel they have at present strength, purity and faith, and joy in prayer, let them not rest satisfied ; but try with God's help to increase these to such an extent that the soul may not have to starve wholly when the evil day comes. There may be rise and fall ; increase and decrease ; but the soul must, amidst all such fluctuations, maintain an unvarying and constant quantity of piety and faith. There may be ebb and flow ; but the stream of spiritual life must never dry up. There must always be a sufficient fund of spiritual resources, which though reduced in seasons of scarcity will suffice to help us to survive all trials. Thus raptures may be followed by sorrow, but there must always be contentment ; wisdom may make way for ignorance, but faith must abide ; enthusiasm may subside into indifference, but hope must not die away ; instead of plenty may come want, but competence there must always be. Yesterday we shed tears of love and joy and enjoyed profound communion with God during prayer ; to-day the mouth prays but the heart is in the world and feels no interest or joy in devotion. In such cases we must be satisfied that though prayer be cheerless, it is addressed to the Real God through faith. In short we should always see that though the outward manifestations of religious life indicate great changes, its root is never affected or suffered to

wither ; there may now be joy and then sorrow, but life should be steady. If any trial directly or indirectly sap the foundations of spiritual life, and affect our faith and hope, then is danger to be apprehended. Such danger does not at first appear serious, because the evil insidiously and imperceptibly corrodes the vitals of the soul. And many therefore carelessly or proudly neglect the first symptoms, and within a year or two lose their faith altogether and become apostates. Such cases may be found among us, and we need not seek illustrations at a distance to caution our Brahmo friends. Not a few Brahmos after passing through fluctuations and trials have at last become despairing sceptics, and have been found to carp at those very doctrines of faith, self-sacrifice and prayer, which they once so highly valued and practised, and to vilify those men and institutions they once sincerely honoured. Such perils await all who neglect the vital springs of their souls—faith and hope—and allow these to be affected by every outward change of circumstances. If they wish to outlive all changes and reverses, which are inevitable, they ought to see that even when all outward circumstances combine against them and make the spirit weak, hard, gloomy and fretful, the pulse of hope still beats, and the heart of faith still throbs. And in order that vitality may endure through such trials two things are necessary ;—the least indication of declining faith or hope should make us run to

the Lord for immediate protection ; and secondly, in seasons of prosperity surplus resources should be reserved to meet future contingencies. In summer lay up provisions for the winter. Nourish the system while it is day that you may not starve during the night. Be ever ready and armed that the foe may not take you by surprise.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

THERE is an infinite diversity of opinions among Indian Theists respecting Jesus of Nazareth, ranging from intense hatred on the one hand to profound reverence and personal attachment on the other. Not a few there are who look upon him with almost the same spirit of sectarian antipathy and abhorrence as Hindus, and even go to the length of calling him an impostor. Such ideas are happily dying out. The vast majority of our brethren of the liberal school cherish respect and gratitude towards Christ, and some even accept him as a guide and master. We have no desire to enter into a theological controversy on this subject, but we think it necessary to say a few words to point out the manner in which we accept Christ, so as to make him unto us not a source of wranglings and disputes, but of life, strength and righteousness. We, Theists must take it to be foreign to our purpose to canvass the thousand theories which have been propounded about him and his creed ;

but surely it is our interest and duty to receive from him that healthy moral influence which he is appointed in God's economy to exercise on the world, to love him and revere him and follow his teachings and example. We must remember that there is a bodily Christ and a spiritual Christ, a local Christ and a universal Christ, a dead Christ and a living Christ. Orthodox Christians may deal with the former and seek revelation and salvation in the visible and tangible incidents of the Christ that was. But our business is with the spiritual, universal and living Christ. What shall we do with the *body*? We want the *spirit*. Not the son of man but the son of God in Christ is needful for our salvation. In the purely human Christ we can hardly feel any interest; but the divine elements of his character come home to every "man's bosom and business," and are of the highest importance to our redemption as involving the eternal and universal principles of ethics. By Christ we mean not the person bearing that name, not his form and flesh, but the spirit he embodied,—the spirit of faith, love, righteousness and sacrifice of which he was unquestionably a noble impersonation. We always attach to him this significance; we look upon him in this light; we try to imitate and follow him as such. He does not come to us as God, the Father, Ruler and Saviour, in human form; he is not an advocate or intercessor striving to appease an angry deity; he does not present him-

self to us as an external fact to be believed on historical testimony ; nor is he to us a mere good man who lived a pious life and died a noble death. Christ stands before us always as an incarnation of faith and loyalty to God, an example of self-sacrificing devotion to truth ; he is to be accepted in spirit and converted into an internal fact of our life ; he is to live in us perpetually as the spirit of godliness. We do not care to 'believe' in the outward and dead Nazarene, or make a declaration of such belief in an orthodox style. But we do care to assimilate the spirit of Christ to our souls. We must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the spiritual Christ, and thus incorporate into our spiritual constitution the principles of faith and sacrifice, love and obedience which he embodied. Thus the spirit of Christ shall constantly abide in us as the living Christ ; thus instead of adoring him or praying to him, we shall ever strive to enter into deeper communion with his spirit, and to advance nearer and nearer to the Infinite Father with the spirit of that holy brother's faith and love growing within us.

THE STUDY OF SCIENCE.

A THEIST must love science with warm enthusiastic love, for science is God's scripture, written by His own hand, infallible and sacred. There are men who look upon science as a mere record of wonderful discoveries and inven-

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tions, or at best an exposition of fixed mechanical laws, and as they read and investigate and reflect they ejaculate with wonder and joy—How unalterable these laws! How illustrious the men who discovered them! Their interest in science is wholly intellectual, not religious. They give glory to Laplace and Newton, not to the Lord of creation. In fact they perceive no religious significance in scientific facts. But with a Theist the case is different. To him every scientific fact is full of God. It directly and vividly reveals His power, wisdom and love. Each force manifests the Central Life; each law, the fixed and inexorable will of the Great Creator; each mark of design and contrivance, His deep wisdom, and each beneficial arrangement His paternal love. In studying science the Theist does not reach God through slow and laborious processes of induction and inference, but he realizes God and communes with Him face to face. He feels he is reading God's own handwriting. He sees the beauty of the Maker reflected on the mirror of creation. He hears His voice in rustling leaves and murmuring brooks, the roaring thunder and the sweet warbles of feathered songsters. In fact to him all nature is full of life. Divinity dwells and speaks everywhere. Anatomy and physiology, geology and astronomy, chemistry and zoology are living preachers that speak forth saving wisdom. The smallest science primer is a stirring sermon to a devout Theist, and as he reads fact

after fact he cannot help bowing before the throne of Almighty God and magnifying His name. There are certain scientific facts which thrill and electrify and quicken the whole soul. In their presence the true believer feels that he is inspired as by a touch of heaven. The veil suddenly drops from creation's face, and all nature is aglow with the beams of the Heavenly Sun bursting into view. Then we feel how little is the difference between a scientific discourse or experiment and a sermon, and how near we are to the sacred altar, though only engaged as students in scientific researches and studies in a reading room. We sincerely hope all Brahmos, young and old, will assiduously and reverently cultivate the sciences, study closely the scripture of nature, and worship in the vast cathedral of the universe, under heaven's canopy, the Great Spirit who shines everywhere.

SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE.

THE chief philosophical difference between the creed of the Brahmo Somaj and other creeds will appear on analysis to be nothing more than the old difference between the subjective and the objective. Brahmoism deals mainly with subjective realities. All other creeds deal more or less with objective realities and visible rites. Take the idea of God. All forms of faith from the grossest fetichism to the most refined type

of idolatry and incarnation-worship are but attempts to see and adore a material and visible deity. Unable to realize the Unseen Spirit, unable to believe, love or serve One whom the senses fail to reach, men have in all ages longed for a visible deity in the heavens above, on the earth below or in the depths of the sea. It is this irrepressible longing which explains the vast and varied pantheon of false divinities worshipped by different sects in ancient and modern times. Under its impulses men have made images of wood and stone, of metal and clay, or bowed before trees, reptiles and four-footed animals, or offered homage to heroes, martyrs and saints. Christianity, in which perhaps the most rational attempt has been made to gratify this longing, seeks only a visible *manifestation* of the Divine Spirit in Christ Jesus; though of course it must be admitted that orthodoxy identifies him who manifests with Him who is manifested, the finite reflection with the Infinite Light. This desire of materializing religion shows itself not only in worship, but likewise in matters of revelation, atonement and future life. Men cannot read the unseen words of wisdom and salvation inscribed on the tablet of the heart and the pages of the volume of nature, and they want a visible revelation of Divine counsel written by God's own hand and impressed on paper with printer's ink. Hence the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Men cannot wipe off the accumulated iniquities of the heart, and find their

warfare with secret sins and deadly spiritual foes hopelessly ineffective ; they therefore devise outward methods of purification. Pilgrimages, sacrifices, ablutions, recitations of sacred texts, intercessory prayers and external ceremonies have been the consequence. So also with regard to the great ' hereafter.' The human mind carries the gross ideas of matter even beyond the grave, and fondly descries through the vista of hope mansions of gold, translucent with heaven's light, and gardens breathing ambrosial odours, and fountains from which sweet nectar doth perennially flow. All this paraphernalia of materialistic theology—highly gratifying to the senses, imposing, grand and loveable—is a shadow and an unreality in the estimation of a Theist. His God, his revelation, his expiatory rites, his heaven are all spiritual. He does not ignore matter, He does not deny its uses. There is much in the visible world before us which can and does exercise the most beneficial moral influence on us. Scriptures and prophets are invaluable teachers, and woe be to him who dishonors them ! But it is alike unphilosophical and superstitious to identify them with our salvation. Between outward truth and truth in the heart as an ' actual possession there is a vast gulf ; and the question is how it is to be bridged. To touch a book full of wisdom is not to grow wise ; to bow before a saint is not to become saintly. There may be a hundred lights shining before us, each bright as the sun ; but we are blind and

see them not. Grant that the scriptures are perfect and that saints are perfect ; the perverted heart appreciates them not, and "all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye." Objective purity is not subjective purity. A good book and a prophet are useless unless the heart is turned by God Himself to discern truth and goodness. The Theist looks upon all scriptures and prophets as partial aids to devotion and sanctification, but believes that the light which saves cometh into the heart from God Himself. The heart must first be quickened by the direct action of the Holy Spirit before it can understand or accept anything good in the outside world. True revelation is the subjective book that is dark—not the letter that killeth. True salvation is the actual purification of our inner life, not the recognition of purity in an outward object or being.

THE LOVE OF MAN.

NEVER was the doctrine of the love of man so emphatically set forth as in the following imperishable words of John which occur in his first epistle :—"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar : for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?" Here the severest condemnation is pronounced upon those who while pretending to love God hate their brethren. They are set down as liars and

hypocrites, and their boasted love of God a lie. The love of the visible brother is declared to be essential to the love of the invisible Father. However deficient we may be in our practical fidelity to this excellent doctrine, none can venture to dispute its ethical correctness. Our own experiences verify the truth of it to the very letter ; we feel it in our dealings with the world. But the truth is deeper than at first meets the eye ; it involves more than many are perhaps inclined to admit. They would accept it in a general sense without the slightest scruple, but they are not prepared to carry it out in all its bearings. Like many other ethical maxims it is readily accepted as a seed-principle, but thousands recoil from its more fully developed forms. Let us then analyze the doctrine before us, and evolve its full significance. It embodies two principles,—the love of God and the love of man, and shows the connection between them. To comprehend these properly it is necessary to remember that our relation to a brother arises from and is dependent upon our relation to a father, and that the sentiments and feelings incident to these relations are held together by indissoluble natural bonds. Children born of the same father must feel fraternal feelings and sympathise towards each other because of their common parentage. Their mutual brotherhood is the natural consequence of a common fatherhood. So it is with us as children of God. Our relation to each other as brothers

is not an arbitrary relation, nor has it any existence in itself ; it exists and must exist because of our relation to God as our common Father. If it is true that He is our Creator, Preserver and Father, it necessarily follows that we are fraternally related towards each other. The recognition of the former relation necessitates that of the latter. We cannot admit the one without admitting the other. The two must go hand in hand—the love of God as Father and the love of man as brother. That a man should love his brother man without loving his God is as impossible as it is to love God without loving man. Show us a man who hates and dishonors his neighbours, it is absolutely certain, let him say what he likes to the contrary, that he does not love God as his Father ; what he prides himself on as the love of God is a self-deception, mere morbid sentimentalism. Whoso has learned to love God as his Father must unavoidably, under the impulse of natural feelings, look upon each of His children as his own brother, and try to love him and serve him as such. He who is true to his Father must be true to all the children of that Father. That man is therefore a ‘liar’ who says— I love God, and yet hateth his brother. So far the doctrine under consideration is quite clear and indisputable, and we need not dilate on it at greater length. It is further said or implied in the context of the doctrine we are discussing, that he who does not love his brother *cannot* love God. The argument may be more fully

stated thus,—He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot possibly love his Father whom he hath not seen ; in other words, the love of brother man is an indispensable means towards the attainment of the love of God. Religious progress is like climbing up a ladder, advancing step by step. In order to reach the higher step we must pass the lower one, or we cannot reach the former by any means,—there is no advance *per saltum*. We must pass through all intermediate stages of progress, gradually and in regular order, before we can enter the kingdom of God. He who neglects the means must miss the aim, he who does not pass through the first stage must find it a hopeless task to reach the second ; his boastful ideas and ambitious projects must meet with discomfiture. Whoever therefore says he loves God, and yet has no love for his brother, tells a ‘ lie,’ and talks of what is impossible in the nature of things. For verily the love of the visible brother is an indispensable training towards the love of the Invisible Father. We must learn to love little man before we can love the Great God. The world is our school where the visible objects of nature and above all the lives of men teach us to know and love God. Without the education which we there receive the conception and love of the invisible spiritual reality of the Godhead would be impossible. What is true of the love of God is equally true of gratitude and reverence towards Him. All these sentiments we first learn to

feel towards man, and then learn to feel in an immensely intensified degree towards God. We love, respect and thank man whom we daily see and deal with in the world, and thus trained we learn to offer our love, reverence and thanksgivings to the Infinite Spirit. He who never thanks his earthly benefactor—can he be grateful to God? He who does not respect an earthly superior—can he reverence the Supreme? He who does not appreciate and love the true and good in humanity—can he realize and love the excellence of the Divinity? He who has never been charitable and forgiving towards his brother—can he measure the height and depth of God's forgiving mercy? No; he who says he can, gives utterance to a 'lie.' In short the exercise of good feelings towards man is an indispensable mediate step towards the exercise of corresponding feelings in a higher degree towards God. This is the doctrine of Human Mediation, and we feel bound to justify it absolutely. But while speaking of the true doctrine it is perhaps necessary to say what is the false doctrine of mediation, in order that while we adopt the former we may guard ourselves against the latter. To honor or love man that we may learn to honor or love God is right. To honor or love man as God is wrong and impious. To thank every human benefactor for material or spiritual benefits conferred that we may learn to thank God is right and necessary; but to exhaust our gratitude on

any particular man as God is wrong. In the latter case instead of making man what he ought to be, an intermediate stage, we make him the terminus of our spiritual progress ; we forget and miss the end in the means. It would be sinful to allow any man or men to usurp the place of the Divinity in our esteem, gratitude or love. The worship of man or any created object as our Saviour is idolatry, and ought to be eschewed as an abomination. So should we shun the pride which prevents our hearts from bowing to the earthly father whose kindness reveals to us the heavenly Father's merciful providence ; or to those spiritual teachers and guides, who—whether dead or living, whether accredited prophets, ministers or missionaries, or rude pious rustics or forlorn mendicants—by their words and lives teach us to know and love and serve our Maker. Blessed is he who honors father and mother and all spiritual and worldly benefactors, who honors and loves all men as brethren, whether friends or foes, high or low, for such a man loves God truly. Misguided idol-worshippers, defile not your hearts by adoring created objects, thinking that these will give you salvation, for none redeemeth sinners from the bondage of iniquity but the Holy Lord. Ye proud and stiff-necked rationalists and mystics, think not of soaring into God's house with the aid of reason or solitary prayer alone, while your hearts are overloaded with the filth of hatred, ingratitude and misanthropy ;

for "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased," and he that hateth his brother shall find His Father's house closed against him. Let us therefore be humble and love one another, that we may love the Lord our Father ; for "if we love one another, God dwelleth in us and His love is perfected in us."

THE APOSTOLICAL MISSIONARY.

THESE are the memorable words in which Christ sent forth his Apostles to preach the kingdom of God :—"Take nothing for your journey ; neither staves nor scrip, neither bread, neither money, neither have two coats a-piece ; provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass, in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither have two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, and salute no man by the way." In these simple but stirring words of a solemn farewell the disciples are commanded to go forth on their missionary tour among 'heathen' nations, destitute of all means of sustenance and all comforts of life, without shoes, and without a scrip in which the gifts of charity may be secured, exposed to all the contingencies of want and suffering, and having no provision even of the necessities of life ; they are to go forth trusting solely to the protection of Providence and relying on the strength of the Almighty. And what is to be their reward ? How are they to be received and treated by the world ? "Go your ways, behold I send

you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Beware of men, for they will scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, and the brother shall deliver up the brother, and the father the child and the children shall rise up against the parents and cause them to be put to death, and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." What gloomy prospects are here held forth to the ambassadors of Christ ! They are assured that not only will they find no hospitality or gratitude but they will find everywhere hatred, bitterness and anger, and will be hunted down with the fiercest persecution. They are to go like meek lambs among ferocious wolves, unarmed and defenceless. Yea their very nearest and dearest relatives are to rise in arms against them, and domestic affections are to be converted into most deadly enmity, and those whom nature has appointed to protect and sweeten life are to wield the weapons of death. Thus, unfurnished and unprotected, and with such appalling prospects before them, the devoted disciples of Christ embarked on their perilous enterprize. History tells us what marvellous success they have achieved in spite of these stupendous difficulties. That the majority of Christian Missionaries of the present day bear not the most distant resemblance to the early propagators of the gospel, either in the spirit or the form of self-denial, no one will deny. The difference is vast and obvious. But whether this circumstance in any way detracts

from the merit of these Missionaries and materially affects their claims to be reckoned faithful messengers of the gospel is a question on which opinion is divided. There are many who think otherwise, and hold that the altered circumstances of the age demand and therefore justify the departure on the part of modern Missionaries from the strict course of action pursued by the Apostles. According to them the Missionaries act wisely in not going to that dangerous extreme of self-denial enforced in the gospel, which would not only impair their usefulness and expose them to ridicule and hatred, but in barbarous heathen lands would bring their very life to an untimely end. This point requires serious consideration. Nothing can be clearer than Christ's idea of the Apostolical character as set forth in the words quoted above. In commending it he evidently laid stress on the spirit not on the form prescribed by him. No importance should be attached to any particular form or outward sign of Missionary character. For it is immaterial whether a Missionary has one coat or two coats, • nor would the discovery of a farthing in his scrip render him liable to forfeiture of his honors. The outward sacrifices are only natural manifestations of the spirit of true self-denial, and as such we justify them. We say *natural* advisedly, for the Missionary naturally assumes the character represented in the gospel. Christ's ideal of the Apostle is no less sublime and high

than universal and natural. He does not enforce a stiff unnatural system of asceticism and mortification, by his own arbitrary authority. A trustful surrender of self to God is all that Christ demands ; and the particular forms of self-denial he specifies are the spontaneous and inevitable consequences of such surrender. We uphold the Apostolical character not because it is Christian, not because it is founded on Christ's precepts and example, not because it was adopted by his Apostles and disciples ; but because it is natural, it harmonizes with our spiritual instincts ; it is the necessary consequence of faith and resignation, and is seen more or less in all men who devote themselves to Missionary work, in whatever age or country. It tallies exactly with our ideal of what a Missionary ought to be. We regard a Missionary as a servant of God, destined and commissioned by Him to devote his life wholly to the propagation of truth. His mission is identified with his life. He has no existence apart from it. He lives for no other purpose in the world, and he dedicates his whole heart and soul and body to his mission, and seeks to fulfil it with unflinching earnestness however much he may thereby be exposed to inconveniences and privations. Unlike the hireling who does his work for the sake of pay, and is sure to abandon it unless he receives his wages as recompense, he holds himself responsible to God, and seeks no reward on earth for what he feels inviolably pledged to do. He has

not been made a Missionary by ordination ; his credentials do not lie in his academical degrees ; his mission does not hang on the patronage of any Society. The deep faith of his own soul seeks spontaneously to communicate itself, and thus by a secret and resistless process of nature he becomes a Missionary. It is not choice but necessity that makes him adopt the high vocation. He must make known to others those precious truths which God has revealed to him. His own faith is the secret of his mission to others, as well as the soul of his success. The truths that fall from his lips are the overflowings of his heart ; the light wherewith he enlightens others is the light of his own life. His character and position are likewise determined by his faith. His life is a life of simplicity and self-denial ; he has no desire of worldly enjoyments and honors, no fear of worldly distress and danger ; his heart is above the world. With firm faith he goes about preaching God's truth, prepared to meet obloquy and persecution and lay down life for its sake. With cheerful trust in Providence he goes from country to country, converting sinners and extending the kingdom of God, destitute of the comforts of life, provided with no security against want and starvation, and regardless of to-morrow's bread. The Lord feeds him and clothes him ; the Lord protects him. His only object is to serve his Master, and the very spirit of entire submission with which he works brings to him both

daily bread and inward joy. He takes lessons from the "fowls of the air" and the "lilies of the field." The influence of such a man must necessarily be vast and deep ; he would convert whole nations by his living faith. Such is our ideal of a Missionary. It is, we believe, substantially the same as that which was inculcated by Christ, and which was to a great extent realized in the lives and character of his Apostles. Self-denial forms the essence of his sublime teachings, and the Apostolical character which his disciples assumed was its necessary consequence, its natural manifestation in the sphere of Missionary work. His apostles were in fact living examples of that devotion and resignation which he required of all his followers.

THE REALITY OF GOD.

WHAT can be more obvious than the reality of the material objects with which we daily come in contact ? The rose we see, the table we use, the food we eat,—are not these *real* things ? Everybody says and thinks they are—from the little schoolboy to the profoundest thinker. So palpable and self-evident is this truth, so strong and universal human faith in it, that to deny it would argue nothing short of insanity and a total perversion of the intellectual nature of man. No man in his senses would call a tree or a mountain a shadowy unreality, or regard the star-bespangled heavens

as only a brilliant vision. If a man were to say that he never eats any real substance but at dinner swallows mere ideas, people would laugh at him and question the soundness of his cerebral system. Matter is real,—this is an incontestable truth, and as clear as noon-day. Yet this simplest of all truths, has taxed the minds of the greatest thinkers of ancient and modern times. For many long ages metaphysics laboured to discover proofs of the reality of the material world, but in vain. Most ingenious theories were propounded, and elaborate systems fabricated to account for it, but all failed in the end. All men believed in the reality of matter, but none succeeded in discovering the logical ground of such belief. The rose *is* real, but how do I know that it is so? Where is the evidence for such presumption? By what process of reasoning do I come to such an inference? Of this problem ancient and modern philosophy failed to find any solution until the last century shed light on its intricacies, and by one stroke cut that Gordian knot which had been the puzzle of ages. We perceive the reality of that external world *immediately* and *intuitively*, and without any reasoning. So said Reid. This simple announcement was enough. It brought peace into the agitated world of metaphysics; all controversy was silenced, all doubts were dispelled, and all difficulty vanished. The truth is that as soon as we perceive an object we know it to be an external reality. The knowledge is imme-

diate, and is above reasoning. The same truth, we say, applies to our cognition of God. We speak of course with reference to the normal and natural condition of the mind. It has long been the fashion, and it still is, to represent man's knowledge of the Real God as a logical inference and the result of laborious process of reasoning. It is assumed that our highest idea of God is only an inferential belief in His existence and attributes, deduced from *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments. To us this appears to be a grave mistake. There is no more logic in our apprehension of supersensible than of sensible realities. As the real existence of matter, so the real existence of God is immediately cognizable. No logical process intervenes in either case. Knowledge means direct perception. It is true that there are men who rest satisfied with logical notions of God and His attributes, and whose highest belief is only the final Therefore of a long series of Wherefores. This is evidently second-hand knowledge supported by hearsay evidence, and cannot be identified with the true conception of the Divinity. It is one thing to say logically—'God is,' and be able to produce extraneous testimony in proof of the thesis ; it is quite another thing to say—'Here is God, my eyesight is my witness.' The one is a mere admission of the being of God, the other is the vivid knowledge of His Living Reality. We regard the latter as the only true knowledge of the Supreme Being. It

is this which we understand by Theistic cognition and faith. A second-hand notion of a material object is possible, where we see not with our own eyes and trust hearsay evidence, or where we are blind and cannot see. But such a notion is nothing compared to the vivid perception of the real object as it is seen with one's own eyes. So it is with our knowledge of God. Man needs not abstract notions, logical ideas or cold formal inferences of a distant deity, but a clear and direct perception of the Real God, whom he wishes to love as his Father and follow as his Master. Nothing short of this can satisfy our hearts or rescue our souls from the besetting doubts, difficulties and dangers of the world. We must *see* Him and *realize* His presence; or we know Him not as He ought to be known. The heart panteth for a direct view of His benignant face, and the Lord of mercy, though invisible, does reveal Himself to man even as visible objects are seen. The eye sees matter and believes it; the eye of faith sees God and believes Him. Why we believe in the reality of material objects philosophy fails to explain, except by declaring such belief to be intuitive and immediate; so true philosophy must confess that there is no other reason why the Theist recognizes the reality of his God except that he immediately perceives Him in intuitive consciousness. All reality according to philosophy is immediately and directly cognizable,—the reality of matter and mind, of *ego*

and *non ego*, and the reality of God. Here belief means perception. What philosophy teaches daily devotion confirms. Believing philosophically that the Real God is unknowable except as an object of intuitive apperception, the Theist finds in his daily prayers and communion the Holy Spirit standing before him, face to face, as a majestic and shining Reality, the very sight of whose face quickens, thrills and sanctifies the soul. Thus philosophy and faith harmonize in our knowledge of God. In thought as well as in prayer the soul realizes Him intuitively.

IMMOBILITY.

HUMANITY moves on,—theologically, to truth, and religiously, to goodness and godliness. History is but a sacred chronicle of the movements of humanity and its struggles towards progress. But history does not, as its readers will testify, record continued and uninterrupted progress. There is a break here and a break there. The stream of progress stagnates at times. The soldier marches and halts, again he marches and again he halts. In the lives of individuals as well as nations we see rise and fall. It seems that the weary pilgrim sits down after a long and laborious journey, and rests for a time before he resumes it. Have we not experienced this in our own lives? Are there not times when our spiritual energies

seem to be at the highest point, and our prayers, our wisdom and love and our active virtues appear in their full bloom ? And do not bad times follow when our spiritual life ebbs away, our activity sinks, our hopes too languish away, nay even our beliefs and convictions become weak and unsteady ? Through some cause or other life, hitherto advancing, comes to a stand-still, and for weeks or months together every thing seems *statu quo*. All is dull and dreary. A fatal immobility seizes the soul, and it cannot move. The best sermons of the best ministers fall flat upon the heart ; the sweetest hymns please us not ; our prayers become dry and unprofitable soliloquies, and our virtuous deeds only mechanical drudgery. Now and then there may flash athwart the mind a holy wish, and a desire to cast off lethargy and press forward. But the palsied soul cannot move, though it would. This is a season of hard trials. Blessed are they that live through it, and safely resume their journey to the holy land, with their faith and energy renewed by Divine grace. But how unfortunate and miserable are they who never recover from their fatal collapse, whose night is not followed by day and, who sleep in life's path but to sink and die ! Let none neglect these times of trial. If the vessel is stranded and moves not, the best efforts should be forthwith made to float her, or shipwreck is inevitable. Beware of immobility ! It is slow but sure death. Progress is life.

RELIGION AND MORALITY.

THE distinction generally drawn,—and one which philosophers also recognise,—between religion and morality, appears to us to be both unscientific and productive of evil consequences. It is a distinction without a difference. Theology and ethics have a common root, and seem divergent and different only in the application of the fundamental ideas which they hold in common. They both deal with our relations and duties to God, and the deeper concerns of immortality. They both aim at purity and salvation. The only difference seems to be that the one deals more with God and His dealings with us, and the other deals more with man and his duties to society and God. The distinction however is not real, not radical. In fact theology and ethics constitute one science, and not two sciences. It is, however, the interest of the world to divorce the one from the other, and treat religion and morality as essentially distinct from each other. It is the fashion to represent morality as something altogether human and religion as something wholly divine. The former is of the earth earthy, and relates to the less important matters of man's temporal relations and social duties. The latter is believed to be heavenly, and comprises the far higher matters of faith, devotion and spiritual communion. This arbitrary consignment of ethics to the affairs of the earth and of theology

to the affairs of the spirit world is harmful in two ways. Among those who profess to be religious there are thousands who neglect and violate the similar rules of morality, while indulging in such things as prayer and devotion. In their religious fervour they become indifferent to their moral delinquencies. Some even go so far as to settle down quietly to a life in which vices and prayers lie in about equal proportions. Every Church has been defiled with the iniquity of professedly religious men. Had they attached equal importance to morality and religion they would have become both purer and godlier. The evil effects of the distinction in question are apparent in another direction. Men of the sceptical school try to persuade themselves and others that they can be moral without being religious, that they can be pure and good in all the relations of life without the aid of anything like prayer. They boast of their moral purity, which they assert they have achieved by their own exertions alone, and without religion and God. Such pride is simply foolish ; such vaunting is preposterously absurd. Can man attain godliness without God ? It is easy to trace these two-fold evils to the unfounded distinction between morality and religion. We emphatically say that no man can be religious without being moral, and none can be moral without being at the same time religious. In fact the two cannot exist apart from each other. Divorced, they die. They are one

and the same thing with different aspects. They are essentially and fundamentally one. Let us prove this. We have already said, in a previous article, that our knowledge of the real entity of God is immediate and intuitive. In other words, we directly perceive the Real God, just as we perceive external objects. But our idea of God is not simply an idea of Divine entity or existence. Truly, to realize God is not to fancy a motionless and inactive substance, but to behold the Living and Active Deity as He is. The spirit of God not only dwells in us but works in us. He not only *is*, but He actively *teaches* and *guides* us. We cannot realize Him apart from His active functions. We not only see His reality, but we hear His monitory voice. How do we hear? As we directly and immediately see Him, so we *intuitively* realize His voice commanding us to do this and eschew that. This moral intuition is conscience. It is nothing but the hearing of God's moral injunctions. To see God is religion; to hear Him is morality. The science of communion is theology; the science of obedience is ethics. They both have their root in our knowledge of God.

RESOLUTION.

DURING the car festival in Bengal one often sees how, when the huge and unwieldy car of Juggernath is pulled along by hundreds of devotees, who lend their feeble hands to the

service of the deity, the wheels suddenly stop, owing to some unknown cause. The men pull the rope, again they pull, but their repeated efforts fail to move the car. Additional hands are secured, but to no purpose. What is the matter? Why this stand-still? None can determine the wherefore. Some are led to think that the ponderous vehicle has somehow become heavier. But no, the car is just as heavy as before. Others conjecture there is some obstacle underneath, but inquiry shows there is none. What then is the cause? While indulging in these fruitless surmises the men are not idle; their hands are plying the rope. Hours have elapsed, yet the car has not moved over an inch of ground. All hope seems to be fast sinking away, and with it the energy of the men, when one among the crowd with the utmost enthusiasm suddenly exclaims "Haribol." The drooping spirits and energies of the entire assembly are revived with aggravated force. They all wildly shout forth "Haribol," and then follows "a strong pull and a pull altogether." And lo! the car moves rapidly and triumphantly. • This incident suggests a lesson of great value, which we should do well to adopt for our guidance. In our journey through the world we often come to a point, we know not how, where all spiritual progress stops, and all our efforts to proceed further prove ineffectual. Day after day we try to move, but we cannot. Months and years elapse, we are where we were. Our ideas and thoughts,

our feelings and sentiments, our prayers and meditations, our actions and undertakings, all seem fixed and screwed into a dull, unvarying and lifeless routine. Neither reading nor friendship nor even travels in foreign countries improve matters. We begin to think we shall never get better, and that spiritual stagnation will bring about our death. The whole scene, however, changes as soon as we, with the name of the Almighty on our lips, and with a noble and strong resolution in our hearts enthusiastically push forward the car of life. What years of thoughtful calculations and plodding industry failed to accomplish is done in a moment by an invincible resolve, which rouses up all the sleeping energies of the soul with God's strength, and says,—“Now or never. Help me God !” The battle about to be lost is gained when the soldier is suddenly thrilled into new life and courage by the Captain's cheering bugle, and plunges into a desperate charge against the enemy. Enthusiasm conquers ; not cold calculating prudence. Inspiration is a miracle, not a slow growth.

IT, HE AND THOU.

THE representation of the Supreme Being by these three pronouns—It, He and Thou, may be said to indicate the three successive stages of man's knowledge of Divinity. In the lowest stage of thought the mind is satisfied

with recognising a creative force or a pervading substance as the God of the Universe. Deity is spoken of, conceived and perhaps also worshipped as a mysterious Something out of *which* has been evolved all that is, and which is the underlying substance and essence of all creation. Neither the intellect in thought nor the soul in worship thinks it possible to get beyond this dim Something, and man's highest aspirations and homage are directed unto the neuter and impersonal pronoun *It*. We detect this form of theology in some of the earliest utterances of the Vedas and the pantheistic teachings of the Upanishads. Take the following lines which occur in the famous hymn (126th) of the tenth book of the Rig Veda :—

“ The only One breathed breathless by itself ;
 “ Other than *It* there nothing since has been ”

The Vedantic motto often quoted in Brahmo books, *Tat Sat*, means “ *It* [God] is truth.” But both the nature worshippers of the Vedic period and the pantheists of the Vedantic age show devotion of a high order and also precious gems of truth. The hardest and worst form in which an impersonal divinity is recognised may be seen in modern rationalism, or force-worship, if we may so describe it. Men of the Darwinian school trace creation through successive evolutions to some mechanical force, and bow before *It* with wondering minds but prayerless souls. In fact these men have hardly any theology, and would be set down as

atheists but for their aversion, for respectability's sake, to that epithet. We come now to the second stage to which natural necessities drive humanity. Man must not only know but also love. His heart naturally turns from an unfeeling creator like space or force to a Person. A loving heart seeks a Loving God. Human personality seeks Divine Personality. The son seeks the Father. The result may be either an indirect knowledge of God or a direct perception of His face. Where the former is the case the Supreme Creator is conceived, loved, adored and served, but always as "the third person." It is a Father and Guide, it is true, but withal a hidden and inaccessible Deity. Divine love acknowledged and magnified, but it is more the love of a ruler's general providence and kind supervision than the special providence and attachment of a father. God does not love us, He does not even know us, individually. We think of Him as a Father feeding and protecting us, and answering our prayers, from His highest throne, through established laws and a general economy. This sort of distant and half-hearted relationship cannot long satisfy us. Nature drives us a step farther. We feel, under the promptings of natural impulses, a strong wish to approach and *see* Him whom we have only known as our Father. And thus 'He' is converted into 'Thou.' In the highest stage of religious consciousness we stand before God face to face, and speak unto Him directly. Our prayers are

not meditations of 'Him,' but words addressed to 'Thou.' The Theist's creed is not—He is, but—Thou Art. The Theist's prayer is not—May He help me, but—Do Thou help me. The Theist's hope is not—He will save me, but—Thou wilt save me. The Theist's delight is not—I am with Him, but—I am with Thee. The world is pressing on towards this direct personal communion with the ever-living and ever-present Father. Blessed are they that *see* God!

FLOWERS.

OUR countrymen have little or no taste for flowers. Even the educated classes form no exception. Whatever the causes of this national deficiency may be, the fact is truly deplorable. It argues not only æsthetic but also moral numbness. There are men who look upon flowers as an unnecessary luxury, affording a mere hollow gratification to the senses. As 'philosophers' they think it unwise to recognise any fascination in flowers, and they wish to keep their hearts above those emblems of ephemeral beauty. They would even proscribe in a cynical spirit the enjoyment of flowers, and set down one who indulged in them as a pleasure-seeker. Now, we do not look upon flowers as a mere source of idle pleasure, though it must be admitted they bring a fund of pure delight to the senses. Flowers have higher uses in the economy of nature. They are capable of exerting a high mo-

ral influence on us. They speak both to the soul and to the senses. They not only gladden the eye, but they penetrate and purify the inner life. Beneath their external beauty there lies hidden a pure and heavenly beauty, which exalts, ennobles and sanctifies the soul and draws it Godward. He who loves flowers loves God, for they are His handiwork. There is something peculiarly sacred in them. They soften our temper, curb our passions, dispel our doubts and fears, and give us purity and peace and gladness. Their very touch seems sanctifying. Their beauty discloses the benignant smile of "our Father dear," and their sweet fragrance wafts into our hearts the sweeter message of His love, as nothing else can. He who casts devout glances on those tender roses, clad in the loveliest attire of vernal beauty, redolent of heavenly sweetness, and softly preaching their Creator's love, cannot but feel that he is near heaven. A garden has been found in all ages to be best calculated to inspire holy thoughts and devotional feelings. What a vast amount of moral influence do flowers exert on the English people, and how passionately fond are even the lowest and poorest men among them of their little flower trees and plants! Here, alas! they are despised and often trampled under feet without compunction. Go to Native houses; not one in a hundred contains a flower pot. This sad neglect of one of the richest blessings of heaven,—one of the sweetest gifts of Providence, distresses us pro-

foundly ; and we wish we could see our countrymen and friends cultivate a taste for flowers in a really devout spirit.

" Oh, would that every man, however poor.
 " Had, in this pleasant favored land of ours,
 " His bit of garden, however small,
 " That he might call his own ; and dig and plant,
 " And eat what he had sown : our city poor,
 " That they could feel the influence of flowers,
 " Summer their children (what is childhood, what,
 " Without its daisies and its buttercups ?),
 " Live in the presence of the mighty trees,
 " And breathe the cool fresh bracing air of fields,
 " Well, if it may not be, then get a flower,
 " And put it in thy window, sun thyself,
 " With its dear beauty, raise thy spirit up,
 " With its fresh fragrance, for it smells of heaven,
 " Remembrancer of Eden. Gardening,
 " Man's primal work, is most blessed toil,
 " And hath strange leverage on us. Dig, thyself, -
 " (The gardener enjoys the garden most,
 " More than his master), and 'twill soothe thy mind,
 " Calm thy irascible temper, hush thy fears,
 " And send thee peaceful to the tug of life,
 " Its crosses and its ills. It cheers a man,
 " Makes him kind-hearted, social, genial,
 " Forms a serene parenthesis from care,
 " And his whole nature raises and improves."

THE ARCHITECT AND HIS WORKMEN.

RELIGION is spiritual engineering. The Lord is the Supreme Architect, and we are all His workmen. We are here, each with a trowel, to build the Heavenly Home. Each has a distinct and definite part to perform, and in his own appointed way, contributes to the general end. On the

mind of each workman is impressed indelibly a complete design of the Home, drawn with artistic perfection and in glowing colors by the masterly hand of the Divine Architect. All mankind are pressing towards a consummation of this high and perfect ideal. Though there is an infinite diversity of operations and a great disparity of ability, there is a striking unity in the general result. The rich and the poor, the learned and the illiterate, poets, philosophers, statesmen, kings and rulers, men of science, school-masters, ministers and missionaries, judges and magistrates, patriots and philanthropists, traders and merchants, all are working, consciously or unconsciously, according to their respective capacities and resources, and in different ways, to promote that common object, and the effect of their conjoint exertions is that century after century the house of God slowly rises. The progress is slow, very slow. Centuries are but minutes in the history of human progress. Nations rise and fall, kingdoms flourish and fade, the tide of revolution sweeps off the landmarks of ancient institutions, old races die and new races become old, yet the upshot of all these vicissitudes is the steady growth of the Divine family. All ancient history conduces to it, the tide of modern history is rolling towards that destination. No nation, no individual has lived in vain. No institution, religious, moral or social, has perished without leaving its effects. The lowest and obscurest man is quietly contributing

to the advent of the kingdom of heaven—the edification of God's church. Some may have more important functions than others. Some may achieve mightier and more glorious exploits than the rest. But all hands are needed to complete the future home. None can be dispensed with without leaving a void. Every hand is needful, aye indispensable. Let us draw two lessons from the fact. We must respect each other, and never despise even the least among men, for the Lord uses the highest and the lowest alike as instruments for the construction of His house on earth. Let none think he can do any part of the work single-handed, however great his intelligence, ability and piety may be. Those whom he hates and tries to shun as his inferiors are quite as needful to the completeness and success of the vast engineering enterprise in which he is engaged. He may have been appointed to a higher order of work, nevertheless he must remember that all are "called," and none can be rejected or ignored. Should he proudly despise any he does so at the risk of endangering the completeness and unity of the Father's house. Let them welcome all into workmen together. Let mutual respect keep the field as co-workers, believing that even the smallest instrument is needful, and the commonest workman that climbs up the scaffolding with a handful of mortar is indispensable. Another lesson may be deduced. We mean unity among God's children. If we are all enlisted in the ser-

vice of the Divine Architect and engaged in the same work why should we fall out ? Are we not serving the same Master ? Are we not working out the same design ? If so, why should we quarrel among ourselves ? They are mistaken who believe that there must be an identity of occupation or at least a uniformity of procedure in order that there may be unity of spirit and friendly communion. They are hoping to achieve an impossibility who try to make every body think and say and act as they themselves think, say and act. It is absurd to suppose that all men can be tied to the same unvarying routine of daily work. If men were dead matter then alone would this be possible. Nor is dull uniformity nature's economy. In the moral as in the physical world there is unity in the midst of variety. Men will disagree, races and communities will differ, there must be differences of tastes, predilections and social position, yet all must contribute to the success of their common mission. Retaining their respective individuality and all their peculiarities of temper and character, they must work together in a friendly and harmonious spirit, under the leadership of their common Head. Thus there will be unity in spite of diversity, true concord in spite of apparent discord. The workers are many in their diverse occupations and pursuits ; but they are one in their central destiny. Let us not quarrel because we are engaged in executing different parts of the building or supplying different

kinds of materials. Let us rather rejoice that with all our differences, personal and national, we are carrying out a common plan and serving and glorifying a common Master.

PERCEPTION AND REFLECTION.

IN perception we see an object as one, although we are cognizant only of its many qualities. We apprehend the unity of the substance amidst a variety of phenomena. We do not perceive abstract qualities ; but we see the concrete reality in which these qualities inhere. The same remark applies to our knowledge of God. In intuitive perception the mind apprehends the unity of God, not the multiplicity of Divine attributes in a state of abstraction. With the eye of faith we behold Him as one. He has many attributes, it is true,—power, intelligence, love and holiness ; but we do not realize these abstract qualities analytically. We perceive the One Divine Being who is possessed of these attributes. In fact the direct and immediate knowledge of matter and God is and must be a knowledge of synthetic unity. Those who charge Theists with worshipping an abstract deity ought to know that their charge amounts to a philosophical absurdity. It is as ridiculous to talk of men perceiving not flowers but abstract notions of the color and form of flowers, as to declare our intuitive cognition of God to be a congeries of abstract notions of power, wisdom

and purity. We can no more see abstract mercy then we can see abstract color. In perception we realize a merciful person, a colored object. The case is different however in reflection. Reflective knowledge is analytical. After having seen an object we may reflect on its qualities apart from each other. We may think only of color, compare the colors of different objects, and at last write a scientific treatise on color. Similarly, after having beheld the One True God in our intuitive consciousness, we may subsequently reflect on some one of His attributes only, love for instance, and write a long sermon detailing the character of Divine love, its various aspects and manifestations. All this is the result of reflection, which analyzes objects and studies each part clearly and fully, for scientific or other purposes. Science is impossible without reflection and analytical thought. If we wish to have a complete scientific knowledge of the Deity we must have recourse to reflection. Thus the necessity of both kinds of knowledge, intuitive and reflective, is apparent. In the utility and necessity of this double cognition it is easy to trace the mercy of the Creator. There are peculiar seasons in life when the one or the other is most needed, and God has so provided that we can have it when it is needed. In prayer and communion the soul requires a direct knowledge of the Real God as He is. We must stand in His holy presence, and express our wants. The begging soul does not want a

fractional divinity. One or two isolated Divine attributes will not satisfy it. The Real God who knows our wants, loves us, and can save us ; who, in other words, possesses knowledge, mercy, power and holiness, must be seen by the suppliant before he can offer any prayer. So when we wish to realize the joys of communion we must keep our eyes steadily fixed on the beauty of the Divine face. It is on these occasions that we need intuitive and direct vision. But it sometimes so happens that men form partial conceptions of God. They bow before a terribly just King, whose hard justice almost excludes mercy. Or they may worship and love a too indulgent Father whose love ignores purity. Such partial conceptions of Divinity not only involve intellectual errors but also produce an unwholesome influence on character. Hence it is of the utmost importance that they should be rectified. How ? By attending habitually to those traits of the Divine character which have been ignored or neglected by us or suffered to lie in the back ground. Those who have thought almost exclusively of infinite justice must devote their attention ' to infinite kindness till the two unite in our thought as they are really united in the Godhead. Thus by reflection we not only bring together all the Divine attributes, but keep them on the same level, for each is infinite, and form a synthetic unity corresponding to the Real Divinity. Thus true reflection and true percep-

tion both perform important functions in theology and lead us to the same Divine unity.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT TEACHING.

Of the two methods of instruction and training in vogue among the leaders of religious sects—the one direct and the other indirect—we decidedly prefer the latter. Direct training consists in laying down doctrines and rules of conduct in their minute details, and exercising rigid control with a view to their enforcement. Where such a method is consistently adopted and observed, religious teachers are always busy in elaborating articles of faith and ethical maxims, and lucidly and completely expounding them for the benefit of their followers. A short creed is pronounced dangerous and is always avoided. Aphorisms are not tolerated. What is clear, elaborate and prolix is in demand, as opposed to what is deep, concise and concentrated. Nothing is hidden, everything clearly explained. Nothing is left to be done by the disciples, every needful doctrine is prepared by the teachers so as to be ready for acceptance. The whole creed is delivered, “cut and dry,” into the hands of the followers, in order that they may be spared all effort to understand it, and all doubts and difficulties inevitable in the case of vague and short creeds may, if possible, be avoided. As in theology so in moral discipline, the teacher is bound to provide for every

contingency, and regulate every individual's life with a detailed code of legislative and penal injunctions. Rules of conduct are constantly promulgated and different degrees of punishment are administered to offenders in order to keep the Church in order. Thus a vast and complicated machinery of theological and ethical ministration is kept up to communicate directly wisdom and purity to each individual member of the Church. Men are regarded as mere mechanical recipients, that must be constantly cleaned and polished, and replenished with the waters of truth and godliness by spiritual guides and teachers. Thus ministers and a whole retinue of auxiliaries become indispensable to our salvation. We cannot be wise or pure without them. This system of Church government does not commend itself to us. It seems to us to be human, artificial, mechanical and positively harmful. The other—indirect spiritual ministration—is divine, natural, spontaneous and most salutary in its results. The great secret of this method is that the real work of edification is left in the hands of God, earthly teachers doing little beyond imparting general instructions or serving as occasional helpers. Here we see doctrines and rules, not mechanically forced into the mind by external agencies, but welling up perennially from its own hidden recesses. Here we perceive self-culture, not cramming ; self-government, not the imposition of a foreign yoke. Teachers are essential in both

these methods of tuition, but the indirect method recognises them only so far as they help self-culture. It offers only a short and laconic creed to the disciple containing however the very essence of theology and morality. Though few its words, each word burns. He too who teaches them speaks not in the cold language of a dogmatist, but with the power of living faith. His vocation is not to expound or explain doctrines, but to rouse and electrify the heart. Hence the short creed he inculcates, penetrates at once the deepest depths of the hearts of his disciples, and quickens their best thoughts and feelings. He has only lighted the fire ; given the first shock ; and sown the seed : nature will do the rest. Under Divine grace the holy fire will go on warming and illumining the heart ; the electric shock will go on convulsing it ; the seed will germinate and fructify in the fulness of time. In regard both to doctrine and discipline, the teacher reads only a few short lessons to his followers, and then leaves them to be moulded and governed by Divine grace. He does not undertake to form their faith or their character. That belongs to God. His work is done when he has roused conscience to its work. He ceases to speak as soon as the oracle of God begins to speak in the soul. He does not put himself forward as a law-giver and a disciplinarian, to be referred to constantly and in every instance of doubt and difficulty. The aim of all his teachings and ministrations is to en-

able each disciple to find and interpret the law of heaven in his own soul. He teaches his followers not to look to him as their light, but to seek and enjoy Divine light in their respective souls. His highest teaching amounts to an influence, an impetus, an inspiration. He never even attempts to move their souls like dead machines ; he never thinks of governing them as vassals and slaves with the despot's rod ; he scorns the idea of training them into abject dependence and servile obedience. He aims at the independent growth of every soul confided to his guardianship, and he holds himself responsible to God for the stewardship. He feels he is only a trustee of a wards' institution ; as soon as juvenile souls attain manhood and are able to trust God and serve Him independently, he transfers them from his own hands to the perfect guardianship of the Everlasting Teacher. We all know how Christ adopted this heavenly method of indirect teaching, and how without a creed and with only a few words of power and a living influence that shall endure though kingdoms perish, he revolutionized the world.

CONTRADICTING GOD'S WORD.

MEN not only disobey God's will, but they also contradict His word. It is this double iniquity that makes our conversion so difficult as it is. The man who has, through a habitual course of sensuality, sunk into the lowest depth

of immorality, is suddenly confronted by Divine grace, and receives an unexpected offer of salvation from Him who not only saves them that come but seeks and saves the lost. If the sinner would only believe Him and accept the offer with perfect faith and trust, he would be saved, though his sins were "thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa." But he would not believe. Nay he would proudly call in question and contradict the saving counsel of heaven. The Lord in the plenitude of His mercy repeatedly points out the way, but the unbelieving sinner as often says—this is *not* the way, and turns away from it. 'Pray humbly and sincerely, and thy heart shall become pure,'—saith the Lord. 'No,' says the wicked sinner, 'prayer cannot purify me. I have tried it and found it wanting.' 'Faith can remove mountains of difficulties and make impossibilities possible,'—thus saith the Lord. But the sinner, tauntingly as it were, hints that it is an exaggeration. Should the Lord command us to place our entire reliance upon Him and take no thought for the morrow, our worldly hearts will immediately turn round and say,—'No, that is asceticism, we will not have it. Our children will die if we give up prudence.' If we are divinely enjoined to forgive a troublesome foe, our angry hearts will remonstrate and protest, saying,—'Forgiveness in such a case would be cowardice. We must beat the enemy, or he will get worse.' When the Lord directs

us to cast away unbrotherliness, and unite as one family to form the "kingdom of heaven," our reply is,—'That is poetry, a romantic idea, a dream which can never be realized.' Should the sluggard be disturbed, and roused by a thundering cry in the heavens,—'Rise immediately and fight, or you are ruined,' he will demand and justify a little more sleep and a little more slumber, and argue that nothing ought to be done in haste. Thus we are frequently contradicting God's word, and saying Nay when He says Ay. The sin of transgressing His will is enormous enough. Why do we intensify it, and aggravate the difficulty of cure by denying the remedy? Our salvation will undoubtedly be hastened if we bow with unquestioning submission to those solemn and sweet Divine assurances which hourly we hear in the inmost heart.

WOMAN'S POSITION IN SOCIETY.

OF woman's true character and mission we are yet profoundly ignorant. Her rightful 'position in society even the boasted civilization' of the nineteenth century has failed to determine. Man and woman do not dwell harmoniously on earth; their mutual relations may have improved in the course of ages, but are far from being duly adjusted. Marriage, in the vast majority of instances, is but a desecration of the holy union which it was meant to represent.

The union of hands is a caricature of the fellowship of souls. Exceptions there have been, honorable and exemplary. History has indeed furnished examples of pure connubial attachment in ancient as well as modern times, but they are rare examples. As regards society at large there is very little of what is called true love, though hundreds and thousands daily unite themselves in matrimony with hymen's bonds. The world, taught by hard experience, asks Pilate-like, with a sceptical sneer,—What is love? and would not stay for an answer. To us it appears that like the kingdom of heaven the temple of true love is before, not behind. We have yet to realize the harmony of the sexes. The true relations of man and woman in God's family have not been, but will be determined. For true chivalry we must not look to the past, but to the future. We do not altogether ignore or undervalue the past; it is necessary as preparing the way for the kingdom of love which is yet to come, wherein man and woman shall recognise each other's rights. The struggles and conflicts observable in every part of the world are only the harbingers of that fellowship. The domestic and social relations which hitherto existed between man and woman have been unhinged and unsettled by the waves of progressive thought; and statesmen, legislators and reformers are busily engaged in remodelling them upon a purer basis. Everywhere attempts are being made of a political, legislative

and social character to reform these relations. Seldom was there perhaps so earnest an agitation of "women's rights" as in the latter half of the present century. Here, in India, we are beginning to feel that we have done gross injustice to our women, and that we must elevate them to their true position, or lay ourselves open to the serious charge of dealing with them as slave-holders and cattle-dealers. Practical efforts are also being made, of a highly encouraging character, to further female reformation, in spite of inevitable opposition. If we look to England we shall find that one of the hardest battles in which society is there engaged is that for "women's rights." It is contended that women must receive University degrees, and become doctors, barristers, ministers, missionaries, speakers and professors and that they must be permitted to share all the political and social rights of men. Hundreds are furthering the movement, headed by, some of the best men and women of the country. But thousands there are who hate and try to thwart it. Their rancour is intense, their antagonism inveterate. There is another thing far more striking in civilized society. Among the educated classes there is a growing aversion to marriage. Many seem to have a strong dislike for the "girl of the period," and think it mean and degrading to marry her. Such a state of things in the very centre of civilization and social refinement is indeed painful, and

suggests gloomy and anxious thoughts about woman's position. Alas! she is unhappy. Nor is man happy either. "They rise or sink together." Among Western and civilized nations, man and woman do not, it is true, fight as they do in a barbarous state of society, yet their quarrels are painful and serious. Woman is no longer subjected to a life of cruel physical hardships, and a man would forfeit the title of a gentleman if he ventured to treat her as a beast of burden. This we admit. Yet is her position one of unjust subjection to the other sex. In spite of civilization there is, no doubt, serious misunderstanding between the sexes. They do not know each other, they cannot bear with each other, they are even jealous of each other. They have contrary habits, contrary proclivities, and even contrary wishes and aspirations. They quarrel over the pettiest concerns of daily life. They may 'love' each other as husbands and wives, in the worldly sense of the term; as members of society they may respect each other. But their hearts do not agree; there is no friendly equality. But will they never agree? Yes; only in religion is the desirable union possible. There can be no true love, taking the word in its highest sense, without spiritual fellowship. Marriage is either a spiritual union of hearts and souls in the presence and, under the influence of God, or it is only a carnal alliance. When the Lord brings soul to soul, then only can they be said to enter into

'holy matrimony.' They meet only to help each other as pilgrims to the holy land. How happy are those husbands and wives who are one in the love of God, who share the joys of heaven in their earthly house, and unitedly do all their household work unto His glory ! So too in society man and woman must enter into religious relations with each other or there will be no peace, no progress. Man's sonship and woman's daughtership in relation to the Holy God must be fully recognised, and their mutual services must be based upon such recognition. God as Father is reflected in man's nature. Hence man and woman must bow to each other, for in doing so they bow to Divinity in humanity. They must love and honor each other, for they are brothers and sisters in God's holy family.

ASCETICISM.

THERE is something good even in asceticism, modern civilization hates it, laughs at it, and is determined to hunt it out of the world. To sit with an ascetic in the same room is a disgrace and a scandal which the nineteenth century will not tolerate. Philosophers, theologians, moralists and statesmen have all united in this age to do battle with that mean type of humanity. The man in rags loitering in our streets and crying for food is a 'nuisance,' and is

dealt with by the Penal Code. O thou child of poverty! Is there none in this wide world that will shed a drop of sympathetic tear over thy lot, or say one friendly word in support of thy peculiar mission? It seems passing strange that while the wildest vagaries of imagination and the most wicked speculations and practices find apologists and adherents in this 'civilized' age, asceticism alone should call forth unanimous and thorough condemnation on all sides and be execrated as an unmitigated evil and an absolute falsehood. Our sympathy is with that small but generous school of eclectics who see some truth in every system of belief and believe that no sect is wholly false. That which is apparently a mass of errors and impurities discloses on analysis redeeming features. The darkest night is not without lightning gleams. The lowest hell of error is not without glimpses of heaven. Even in asceticism there is something noble and sacred. That there is foolishness in it and much that is absurd and mean, we do not deny. But does it not reveal also some of the highest forms of truth and goodness which we miss elsewhere? Self-sacrifice is the essence of asceticism,—and who will not value it? With it you see a calm and unquestioning resignation to Providence, a mastery over some of the worst passions of the heart, humility, faith and patience. These virtues are seen to a much greater extent in the life of the ascetic than in any other religious sect. A true ascetic is the very

impersonation of resignation. His life is a protest against worldliness. The most devout may learn a lesson from him and benefit by his superior example. Our proud heads must stoop near the feet of the despised *faqeers* and *yogis* who go about singing the glory of God, and find both subsistence and joy in that heavenly occupation. To those of us who are immersed in the world, they speak with power. Their examples come to us as living sermons on the text, "vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, all is vanity." Indeed, if we wish to draw our hearts away from the shadowy and perishable gewgaws of the world and resign ourselves completely to Providence, if we are anxious to realize the principle of the famous words in the Sermon on the Mount—"Take no thought for the morrow," if we desire to sacrifice pride and worldliness and sensuality, we can do no better than look to all that is heavenly in the lives of mendicants and ascetics. We are not advocating asceticism. Only what is good in it we commend; its admitted evils we hate and proscribe. To renounce the world, family and children, is an error and a sin. To be ever sad and cynical and put on the gloomy countenance of a misanthrope, to remain in sackcloth and mourning to the end of the chapter,—this is hideously unnatural. To treat the affairs and interests of the world with supreme contempt and indifference is only pious selfishness. True

asceticism is opposed to all these. It means nothing more than the crucifixion of worldliness and the lusts of the flesh. It is a life-long adherence to the "vow of penury." It cannot be selfish, for though itself ragged, miserable and poor, it seeks the welfare of all else in the world. It cannot be sad, for it is content with its lot, and feels quite cheerful under the wings of Providence. It cannot forsake home, for though it mortifies and sacrifices self, it cannot neglect the solemn duties it owes to those around. May we have all that is good in asceticism minus its evils!

NATURAL DEPRAVITY.

SIN is not, as many people suppose, a positive evil. It is, like darkness, negative, not positive. We all know that darkness is only the absence of light, and is not a positive thing. So sin is only the absence of the light of purity, and signifies spiritual darkness. The sun is a positive reality; it diffuses on all sides positive rays of light, and removes darkness from the face of the earth. The Infinite Sun of Holiness similarly sheds the light of purity on the moral universe, and dispels the gloom of sin which enshrouds men's minds. To believe that in creation there is a positive thing called sin, whether inherent in human nature or incarnate in a being living apart from men, is to suppose the Holy Lord of the universe capable of creating

by His own hand any thing impure or wicked. No moral evil can emanate from the Fountain of Purity; Holiness cannot create unholiness. This is a truism. To deny it is a scandal against common sense and a blasphemy against the Almighty. Whatsoever the Lord has created is pure, innocent or indifferent. There is no depravity in nature,—neither in material nor in moral nature. For nature is God's. It would be as incorrect and unphilosophical to say that the rose or the lily is wicked as to predicate depravity of man's nature. There is no more iniquity in the human soul created by God than in the material objects framed by His hand. In the *constitution* of things there can be no sin. If then God is incapable of creating positive moral evil, and if nothing impure exists in creation, whence came sin into the world? All sin originates in man's free will. He voluntarily commits sin. The popular idea of sin is that something foul and wicked clings to the constitution of humanity in the shape of vicious propensities. The Hindus speak of *shara ripu*,—the six enemies; as if the Holy and Merciful God has created in the heart of man six natural adversaries to attack and ruin him! Pride, anger, lust, and the so-called passions are not in themselves vicious or wicked. They are meant for beneficial purposes; but they may be abused, and when they are abused they lead to evil. It is not passions that make men sinful; but man's will that makes those passions a source of immorality and un-

holiness. Man wilfully disobeys God's law and rejects His light. Such disobedience is sin ; it is evidently negative. Man's grossest vices are a negation of godliness.

GOD'S GRACE AND MAN'S EFFORTS.

MAN is saved by grace, and there is no merit in his works which can buy salvation. This doctrine, accepted by all humble and devout souls, is sound and true in itself. But there is some danger in the way in which we may apply it to life. There is no difficulty in comprehending the significance of the fundamental principle of trusting to Divine grace alone for salvation. Nor is there any hesitation on our part in recognising the necessity of thorough humility, sincere prayerfulness, and child-like dependence which the doctrine suggests. Neither our boasted wisdom nor our good works avail to save the depraved heart. Weak and wicked, paralyzed any dying, the sinner cannot save himself. None but the Almighty can redeem him from the galling chains of iniquity. We must, therefore, entirely cast off self-sufficiency, pride and presumption, and in all humility kneel and pray. All this is admitted. The question then arises, —Are we to leave every thing in the hands of Providence and remain idle, trusting that Divine grace will in due time do everything for us ? Here lies the difficulty and the danger we are speaking of. If God be all-in-all, is man a cy-

pher in the scheme of redemption? Does salvation mean that man is carried sleeping on the wings of Divine mercy into heaven? If so, many are likely to find in such views a plea of idleness, quietism, dreamy sentimentalism, and even of complaisant acquiescence in a life of ungoverned sensuality and sin. We need not imagine such cases, for they are real and veritable. There are men who actually take advantage, if we may so express ourselves, of the doctrine of Divine all-sufficiency. They confess, with some degree of frankness, that they are unable to cope with the vices to which they have long been addicted, and have no power over the unruly lusts of the heart, that they have therefore abandoned all struggles, and in the midst of inactivity and rest are looking forward to the time when they will be saved by grace. Such time, alas! never comes, for they expect an impossibility. God does not help them who will not help themselves. Hence is it that many in the religious world continue in vice till the last day of their existence, in spite of prayer and devotion and supposed trust in God's redeeming mercy. Nay, we are all more or less prone to this evil, and often fail to reform our habits because we leave that in God's hands which ought to be done by ourselves. Let us find the root of the evil that we may eradicate it. It seems to us that the whole difficulty arises from not recognising the double agency—Divine and human—involved in our salvation. There is

danger in neglecting or ignoring either. If you deny the Divine element altogether, you make man his own saviour. Religion sinks in proud rationalism, and vain conceited man, without prayer, seeks to reform and sanctify himself. On the other hand, if you ignore human agency, religion is reduced to indolent devotion and sentimental pietism lying side by side with undisturbed immorality. There is no salvation unless the two unite. In the normal condition of the soul they do unite, naturally but mysteriously. Divinity and humanity co-work in the soul, and our growth is the result of their joint action. So the little plant grows, drawing sap from the earth and receiving warmth from above. Let none suppose that because salvation is the gift of God's free grace, no effort is needed on the part of the recipient. He must work and labor and struggle to the fullest extent of his physical and mental energies. He must employ all available means of conversion, neglecting no instrument that can help him. If he is beset with temptations or addicted to vicious indulgences, he must be engaged in hourly warfare with them, and do all that lies in his own power to overcome them. And yet he must humbly believe that he does nothing of his own self. He fights in the strength of the Lord. All that he has to do is to surrender himself to God, and then Divine grace works in him and makes him work unto his own salvation. This is the whole secret of the soul's conversion. Here we

see not two facts, but one fact ; not two forces, one wholly human, the other wholly Divine, but one mighty force in which the Divine and the human are blended together. Every step that man takes towards truth and purity is the result of Divine grace, not acting apart from him but working in and through him. He cannot say,—I will not work. Almighty grace constrains him, if he is really humble and submissive, to work and fight. And when the true soldier does fight he feels that the power he exerts is not his own, but the Captain's. His wisdom and love, his prayers and practices are not his, but breathed into him, and sustained too, by Divine grace. There is naught in him that does not bespeak grace. Nothing grows from below but what in the first instance came from above. He reads, he thinks, he acts, he moves his hands and feet, and toils for his own spiritual benefit ; but in all this man works in God and God works through man. Thus pride is rendered impossible on the one hand, and indolent dependence on the other. Deep devotion and earnest war with sin harmonize. Man in prayer humbly says unto God,—I am nothing ; Thou art my all. And in life's battle-field he conquers his passions with Divine power, and vigorously chases away sin, saying,—“ Get thee behind me, Satan.”

A FEW MINUTES WITH NATURE.

OCCASIONAL visits to a garden are alike pleasant and profitable. We recommend them on high moral grounds, both as a relaxation and as a discipline. They are essential to the normal growth of humanity. Constituted as we are we cannot do without flowers and flower-gardens. Life would show a partial and one-sided development without them, and lose half its poetry and sweetness. None interested in true spiritual culture could despise or neglect the heavenly wisdom they preach to the mind, the heavenly joy they afford to the heart, or the healing balsam they dispense to the wounds of the afflicted soul. Their sacred influence is indeed indispensable to the sanctifying and perfecting of our nature. Who does not feel a natural craving for the benefits of such influence? Wearied and exhausted in the struggles and toils of life, harassed by its corroding cares, and embarrassed by its ever-recurring difficulties, who would not instinctively run to a quiet rural retreat, and seek a temporary respite and relaxation under the cool shade of lonely trees? Who would not occasionally shun the city—the whirlpool of activity, and the hotbed of temptations and vices,—and seek the better and purer atmosphere of a country house? It will perhaps be argued that there are not a few in every country who constantly repair to gardens, but with little or no

advantage, and that some even return from such places with polluted hearts. Alas ! this is too true. How many there are among our countrymen who convert their suburban gardens into scenes of bacchanalian orgies and vicious carousals ! Those who are not morally degraded but are yet of a worldly turn of mind think that the highest advantage of garden parties is that friends can sing, dine and converse together, and so enjoy themselves as to forget the cares and anxieties of the world. Their only object is pleasure ; a convivial friendly gathering is all that they aim at. Such men, therefore, derive very little moral benefit from their temporary sojourn in their respective villas, and their character undergoes hardly any improvement. The reasons are obvious. In order to profit by a visit to a garden we must go there with a high moral motive, not with a desire of social re-union or of a mere temporary respite from worldly cares and sorrows. Our object should be to study nature and to hold communion with nature. In such study we shall find the highest wisdom ; in such communion the purest joy ; and in both we shall find a moral force calculated to mould and regulate our character. Those who leave the bustle and traffic of the city for a country retreat or a romantic village ought to feel that they are starting on a pilgrimage to the holy land,—the holiest land on earth. For what place is there holier and heavenlier than a garden ? And let them

so prepare their minds and hearts that their sojourn in that favoured and consecrated place may have a sanctifying effect on their character. On their arrival there they should keep their souls at a safe distance from all things artificial and worldly, and remember that these they have altogether left behind as things with which they have not only no concern at present, but which are positively adverse to their present mission. Let glittering art drop out of sight and the shadowy world pass beyond recollection's field as things irrelevant and mischievous for the time being. Even the company of man and of the best friends should be shunned. For nature can never be fully appreciated or relished except in solitude, and society is an admitted foe to communion. Moreover we have had enough of human society, and having deliberately run away from the haunts of men it is absurd to seek that disturbing influence which it is our present object to avoid as completely as possible. Having thus cut himself off from all adverse influences,—away from the world, family and friends,—let the pilgrim to Nature's shrine take a seat or stretch his weary limbs under a shady tree, and in solitary communion wholly surrender himself to nature. Before and behind, on the right and the left, above and below, it is all nature. He sees nothing else. Nature's beauty, with all its simplicity, freshness and loveliness, encircles and encompasses him on all sides. Every thing he sees is God's handiwork,

fresh from His hand and therefore sacred. In the tree and the flower He reveals Himself, and all space, as far as the eye can reach, is full of Him. The solitary student of Nature feels he is ushered into a new world, where everything is Divine, and whose "sights and sounds" are all celestial. Where am I?—he asks. There is no response except a deep one in life itself. He is lost in nature and in the God of nature. He sees and hears, thinks and feels only what is natural and Divine. He drinks continually the sweet nectar of nature's inspiration. To him nature lives, and warmly he loves nature. How lovely are those tender buds and flowers, how pure and stainless! How their soft lips speak love and wisdom and purity! He hears those words and beholds that beauty, and is charmed. "Yonder rose is my friend and sister,"—his enraptured heart seems to say,— "none on earth so pure, so sweet! I am thine, O rose divine!" Hark! in captivating strains, the little jocund bird above sings its Maker's praise. "Chant those psalms, beloved warbler! And let me soar like thee, O brother, nearer and nearer our Father's throne." Thus the solitary devotee, in full accord with living nature, feels a holy and passionate attachment for trees and flowers, plants and creepers and birds, and for all natural objects. He loves these objects more than his best friends. He finds not only sweetness but also purity in their company. There is no guile, no untruth, no unchastity, no

pride, no envy, no selfishness, no worldliness ; there is nothing mean or impure in nature. The more he silently discourses with nature, the more is he purified and sanctified under its heavenly influence and inspiration. It gladdens his heart ; it does more, it disciplines and reforms his life. Lo ! in a few minutes he has become happier and purer in nature's company ; and he returns to the world and to his family to tell the glad tidings of his conversion in the holy land through floral baptism.

CONTEMPLATION OF THE INVISIBLE SPIRIT.

WE have often heard it said that it is impossible to conceive or love pure spirit, and that therefore an incarnate deity is a necessity. This we entirely deny. We do not think an *avatar* is necessary or desirable. The doctrine of a man-god, far from satisfying, contradicts human nature. We most emphatically say that we do not stand in need of a visible divinity, and would not have it. Those who have studied human nature and the laws which guide it must admit that such feelings as reverence, love and gratitude are invariably directed to qualities of the spirit, and not to material and visible forms. In our daily dealings with each other do we not realize this truth ? We revere those who are virtuous and pure-minded ; we love those who love us and possess attractive and endearing

qualities ; we feel grateful to those who are kind to us. Now purity of character, love and kindness are all spiritual, being qualities of the mind, and cannot be identified with any thing material. It is these which naturally attract and call forth sentiments of regard and gratitude, wholly irrespective of their external surroundings. It is true that in honoring and loving others we honor and love the outward form as well as the inner spirit. Our parents and children, our brothers and sisters, the wife and the friend, attract our affections by their very personal features, and there is sweetness and charm in their very appearance. We wish to see them and enjoy their company as often as possible. Their presence is a source of joy and life to us ; their absence is most painful. We contract such deep personal attachment for them that even their faces become dear to us. We love to imprint their forms on the tablet of the heart, and whenever we think of them, we conceive those pleasant forms. It is clear then that we love both body and mind in those who are dear to us. But philosophical analysis would convince us that the body is loved for the sake of the mind, and that the former has nothing intrinsically loveable or estimable. It is the spirit that is loved and honored in the first instance on account of certain virtues or excellencies. If the external form is loved, it is loved only because of the spirit which is associated with it. Even the ugliest and most repulsive face becomes charming

if it covers a gentle and amiable mind. It is not then the body of a friend or benefactor but the mind that dwells in the body that we truly love and honor. This truth may be made clearer if we refer to those whom we have never seen and yet revere and love. Do we not feel loyal to Her Majesty Queen Victoria? Do we not feel grateful to Newton for the services to the cause of science? Is not the memory of Howard, the philanthropist, dear to us? Does not the mind spontaneously render the tribute of honor and respect to Socrates and all ancient sages, though of their personal appearance it has no means of forming any idea? Do we not feel the profoundest reverence for martyrs and prophets? In all these cases it is clearly the mental character, not the physical form, that we esteem and love. If this be true of men whom we can see, how true must it be of Him whom the eye cannot see! If those who have forms are loved for the sake of the spirit and not the form, surely the spirit of the Formless God must be loved for its own sake. Constituted as we are, we can never love or esteem any thing material or visible. Our best feelings and sentiments run towards the spirit both in man and in God. If it be necessary to call forth and gratify our love or gratitude, we must have before the mind's eye a truly affectionate or charitable heart, and not a beautiful human form. So in offering our love and gratitude to the Supreme Spirit, we need not clothe that Spirit in a charming human and visible

form, as the idolators do, but simply think of those infinite attributes of mercy and loving kindness which belong to Him, and which are manifested both in nature and in His daily dealings with us. In order that we may love and adore Him, it is enough to know that He is merciful and holy. Love kindles love. If He loves us, we must love Him. The logic is irresistible. No human shape is needed to make us love Him, for even in men we love not the form but the spirit. We love the loving God. We adore the holy God. We thank the merciful Father. The object of our love, adoration and gratitude is altogether spiritual. To substitute a visible human form would kill those sentiments of love and reverence, far from helping their growth. Our hearts are naturally drawn towards Infinite Love, and whenever we contemplate or worship our Father we must realize and approach Him as the Infinite Spirit, not bound by the limitations of space and time, not exhibiting through a visible body only finite love and wisdom and power. The sight of gross matter, however elegant and beautiful, is evidently an impediment in the way of true spiritual worship. The contemplation of hands and feet and material body clogs, instead of helping, our conception of the attributes of Infinity, and binds the pinions of the soul that naturally strives to soar upward into infinite space and infinite love. To satisfy such a soul, it is rather our interest and duty

to cast off all ideas of flesh and bones and of material appendages, and try to approach pure spirit in the depths of the heart. They that worship God must worship Him "in spirit." True adoration is the realization of the Divine spirit by the human spirit. The true believer closes his eyes, and positively refuses to see a visible deity. Even if such a deity existed, he would shun it. Were the Lord actually to assume the form of humanity and appear bodily, he would not and could not worship Him. A visible God is no God to him. His God is a Spirit, and he cannot contemplate or worship Him except as a spirit. He does not wish to conceive Him in any other way. Nay he rejoices in Infinite Spirit. A material divinity troubles and torments his heart. He lives perpetually in the spirit-world, and satisfies all his spiritual cravings and aspirations in the Infinite Spirit. If he thinks of departed saints and prophets, he realizes their disembodied spirits in his own soul. Nay even his daily communion with brothers and sisters is altogether spiritual. His God, his home, his family are all spiritual. for, as has been said, "the kingdom of heaven is not lo here ! lo there ! but within."

RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASM.

VERILY the devout are mad. For if insanity means wild eccentricities and a departure from the ways of the world, it is nowhere so

fully displayed and illustrated as in the life of the devoted children of God. They talk and act, think and feel, in a way which the world must pronounce insane. Sanity is the world's monopoly ; wisdom, prudence, philosophy, right understanding all belong to its followers and votaries. How sensible their thoughts, words and actions ! How wise all their speculations and practices ! They seldom err in their private or public life ! But how different is the character of those who devote their lives entirely to God and religion ! How they "flounder on from blunder to blunder," and indulge in the most arrant nonsense ! They are indiscreet, foolish and thoughtless. They prefer the shadow to the substance, the dim uncertain future to the reality of the present hour. They are regardless of consequences, and would do anything that might appear right to them, however injurious to themselves and others. Wedded to their own crotchets and whims, they never take counsel of the wise men of the world. Rather would they foolishly and rashly sacrifice their own lives than recant one iota of their convictions. The martyr blood many of them have shed to magnify their faith is the most striking monument of their folly. Such is the estimation in which religious men are held in the world. They are laughed at, ridiculed and abused as mad men, and their company is shunned. The finger of derision is pointed at them in the streets of the world. Let it not be sup-

posed that the above picture is over-drawn, that we have exaggerated the ridicule and persecution to which religious men are subjected at the hands of the world. We do not mean to urge that the mere profession of religion or the observance of its initiatory rules in the earlier stages of spiritual life is branded as lunacy and folly. The world's persecution begins when man, not content with the lower theology and ethics which it offers, enters into the higher regions of faith. If you follow only that much of religion which chimes in with worldly rules of "propriety," you will not be troubled or ridiculed. You may even be applauded for your success in serving two masters, God and Mammon. You will be patted on the back and encouraged in a patronizing manner for having gained the treasures both of heaven and earth. If you go to church regularly, and yet in your daily life show that your heart is in this world and not in the next, and that in business you are always sensible enough not to be too honest or truthful, you may be sure of high praise for your wisdom. But if you carry your religion beyond the limits of earthly prudence, if you love God more than Mammon, if instead of skimming along the surface you enter into the depths of devotion, if instead of making your faith subservient to the world you make it subversive of your temporal interests, you must be prepared for all the scorn and ridicule which are meted out to the insane. You may

partially serve God while loving the world, and be reckoned wise. But if you love God, they will call you a fool. For love means entire self-consecration, a passionate attachment for the Merciful Father, a burning zeal for His glorification, a self-forgetful rejoicing in His holy name and in the sweetness of His presence. Where there is such a strong religious passion, where the enthusiasm of holy love has been kindled, there must result a singularity of character and a degree of eccentricity and wildness to which the world must apply the epithet mad. Is he not mad who sometimes indulges in six hours' continued communion with God, preferring the bread of life to earthly meals, and the company of the Most High to that of the dearest friends on earth? Is he not mad who actually enjoys the name of the Father and Friend of sinners, and is so captivated with its sweetness as to chant it with passionate devotion every now and then in solitude? Is he not mad who lovingly forgives his enemy, and though insulted and beaten by him, befriends him and humbly prays for his welfare? Is he not mad who enriches others by impoverishing himself, and sells all that he has for the benefit of the world? Is he not mad who deliberately gives his blood to wash away the errors and sins and sorrows of his brethren? Was not Jesus Christ mad? Were not his disciples mad? Were not the three prophets of the sixteenth century, Luther, Chaitanya and Nanac, mad? Were not all

prophets and martyrs mad ? Are not the best of all countries and ages mad ? Yes, such men are mad in the estimation of the world. Their wild enthusiasm outruns its comprehension and sympathy, and is therefore ridiculed and persecuted. Yet who would give up such enthusiasm for the sake of avoiding ignominy ? Let us all be fired with the spirit of enthusiastic love and devotion, and consecrate ourselves completely to the service of our Father, though we may be likened to fools and mad men, and exposed to all manner of derision and contempt.

EQUALITY OF THE SEXES.

IF we are asked to say why we advocate female liberty we must at once remark,—the sister's presence is needful to complete God's family. Our advocacy does not rest on the lower grounds of expediency, conventionalism or civilization. Our ideal of the kingdom of heaven is not a brotherhood but a sisterhood also,—a family of God's children dwelling in peace and purity. To realize this high ideal is the end and aim of human life. We are therefore bound to consecrate all our physical and spiritual energies, our talents, wealth, and life itself to one consistent endeavour to help the formation of a holy family on earth. The education of woman is thus a clear necessity. We have no option in the matter. Nor is it a case of charity. They err who think that the

Indian woman solicits a favor at our hands. No, she demands what is her due ; and we are bound to give it. It is a duty we owe to society and to God that we should recognise and secure woman's rightful position in the divine family. Viewed in this light the neglect of the other sex is not only an impropriety and error, but a sin, a sin of omission ; while the positive subjection of woman to a degrading and demoralizing system of social servitude is a sin of commission. There is no peculiar merit in giving our women what they are clearly entitled to, to wit, knowledge and freedom ; but to deny them these their just rights would be a culpable dereliction of duty. Such, according to Theism, is the right *motive* to the liberation of women. What is the *measure* of such liberation ? How far and in what proportion should we accord knowledge, power and liberty to women ? In reply we simply urge the equality of the sexes. That man and woman differ in temperament and capabilities, in character and occupation, few will doubt. Their differences are not accidental, but constitutional. Nature has made them dissimilar and so marked off their peculiarities that each must naturally follow his or her distinct calling. While admitting all these differences we thoroughly believe in the equality of the sexes and the unity of their highest mission. Underneath the diversities of their character and vocation in society, there is an essential identity of position in their huma-

nity. Judge them according to particular traits of character or capacities and you will find what the one has the other has not. But take the character of each as a whole and all apparent inequality disappears. Man's superior physique who can deny ? His courage, firmness and determination who will not acknowledge to be greater ? But may we not place woman's superior gentleness, meekness, love and charity on the other side of the balance ? If it be true that man governs by the force of his intellect, it is equally true that woman rules with the power of her heart. He may influence society by his frowns ; she does so by her gentle smiles. The proudest husband must own the dominant power of the wife, the most self-willed wife must confess her subjection to the husband's masculine will. Thus it is that nature keeps the "balance of power" in the little world called home. So in society. In England where woman has attained considerable power and in the name of chivalry rules society, man still retains the true gubernatorial authority in his hands. In India where man is a despot, who sometimes out-Neroes Nero, and woman is a slave daily trampled under feet, she is nevertheless the ruling spirit in the highest concerns of domestic and social life. In the competitive battle of the sexes none has ever yielded the palm, none ever will. Each is superior in certain respects, but all things taken together they stand on a level of equality. Absolute superiority or in-

feriority can neither be predicated of man, nor of woman. In God's family man and woman should have a perfect equality of rights and treat each other with equal respect.

ORIGIN OF SIN.

THE will is the root of all that is good and bad in our character. Our virtues and vices may be traced to it as their ultimate source. Philosophy cannot discover an ulterior cause. Ask the sinner why he defiles himself, and he will honestly and promptly reply that he is himself responsible for his own vices, and that he has no other explanation to offer of his own wickedness but that he chose to bring it about himself. Some may try to find at least a partial palliation of their guilt in the violent excitement of certain passions and evil propensities in the heart which are said to drive men *irresistibly* to sin. If vicious motives govern man, then he cannot clearly be responsible for his actions ; the whole blame must attach to those motives or carnal propensities or outward circumstances by which he is said to be governed. But such is not the case. The will is never forcibly or tyrannically swayed by them. It determines ; it is not determined. Motives only offer inducements, which may or may not be accepted by the will. The final power of vetoing belongs to it. If there are bad motives, there are good motives as well. If the charms of carnal life

offer attractions, equally powerful inducements lie on the other side. If avarice, ambition, love of distinction, lust, anger, pride and selfishness incline the mind to evil, justice, charity, patriotism, conjugal affection, forgiveness and all moral and devotional susceptibilities persuade us to walk in virtue's path. It is the will that determines which way the mind is to go. Like well-trained and astute lawyers, the motives present on either side the best and most alluring arguments for good and evil ; it is the will, however, that pronounces judgment after hearing counsel's pleadings on both sides. The power of final decision belongs to none else. It is altogether incorrect to say that man is governed or led away by passions ; the truth is, he allows himself to be so led away. No manner of sin can touch him unless and until he consents to be contaminated. Till his own hand voluntarily signs the bond of self-surrender, impurity has no authority of arresting his body or mind. Sin is not, as some represent it, the murder of the human soul by foul passion ; it is always suicide and voluntary self-destruction. We are ready to admit there is much truth in the argument,—our consciousness being witness,—that passions do acquire considerable power by habit so as to drive us sometimes, apparently in spite of ourselves, into evil. But who gave those passions such power ? If lust, drunkenness, anger and covetousness are sometimes irresistible, who made them so ? The sinner himself.

By repeatedly inflaming them, he has himself enkindled a fire in his own mind which he now feels unable to extinguish. Even when he is desperately assailed and vanquished by certain unruly passions, and lies chained and fettered like a powerless and helpless slave at their feet, it is he himself who gave them the force and the weapons wherewith to conquer and captivate him. His will lies at the root of those repeated acts of vicious indulgence which in the course of time have acquired the solidity and force of a confirmed habit. But however strong and seemingly invincible evil habits may be, they are not really invincible. The enslaved sinner can still rise, re-assert his rights, and cast off the galling yoke of sin. The worst despotism may so weaken and crush his soul as to render him altogether lifeless ; but there is power enough left in him to effect a revival at any moment if he is so inclined. The deadliest malady has its antidote. From the lowest depth of hell the fallen soul can rise in the strength of the Lord to the highest and brightest spot in heaven. The most hopeless sinner is not doomed to the life of an eternal outcast. Man can only mortgage his liberty for a time, but that heavenly treasure he cannot sell for ever. He is made constitutionally free, and though he may serve the world and sin at times, nothing can destroy his liberty,

POWER OF FAITH.

WORDS have power. This truth all ages have acknowledged. All scriptures and all sects bear testimony to it. But this doctrine, originally pure and Theistic, has been misinterpreted and abused. Those who believe that language has a saving power *per se*, that words of themselves can convert men's hearts, are sadly mistaken. Such belief is superstitious, and has done incalculable mischief in the religious world. We Theists too ascribe great power to words, but we never regard it as inherent in them. We believe that power originally belongs to faith though it is afterwards transferred to language. Indeed, there is no power in words as such, however sacred they may be, to move and quicken the mind. But instinct with faith they can exercise a most powerful influence on the lives of individuals and nations. That such influence has been exercised history and biography amply testify. Take away faith, and language becomes dull, powerless and lifeless. Neither the soul that hears nor the soul that utters it is influenced. But when words are pronounced with the deepest faith, they burn and shine, and electrify every soul that comes in contact with them. As an instance take the most hallowed expression in human language,—the name of God. Where there is no faith or pious reverence in the heart that word may be repeated ever so many times, and sung and chanted in

ever so many ways, it will produce no better influence on us than an ordinary word. It will not succeed in subduing rebellious passions or purifying the feelings and sentiments of the heart. When, however, the devout believer takes the name of the Lord with faith and love, and with a thorough appreciation of its solemnity and sacredness, it sanctifies him every time he utters it. Each letter of the Divine name proves a formidable power for chasing away sin and strengthening virtuous habits. If the believer is perplexed with doubts he has only to take the Lord's name, and his doubts will immediately give way to firm and invincible faith. If the horizon of his heart is overcast with the clouds of sorrow, disquietude and anxiety, that name will bring a flood of sweet light in a moment and give him abundant joy. If he is immersed in sin let him only cry 'my Saviour,' and the deepest impurity of his life will be washed away, and the holiness of heaven will descend upon him. The change is instantaneous. The uttering of the Divine name acts as a charm. The waves of mighty passions and unruly lusts subside as soon as it is heard, and wickedness itself seems to run away in a fright at the sound of that sacred word. So true and indisputable is this fact that believers contract a fond attachment for the name of God, love it intensely, rejoice in it, and reverently cherish it in the heart as an up-failing instrument of conversion. They love

God's name as heartily as they love God. The essence of salvation,—of wisdom, love, purity and peace, they discover in the few letters that constitute the sacred name. The reasons are obvious. Faith converts words into a living power. We live as we believe. Our hearts are ruled and moulded by our convictions. Fancy that words have no power and that recitation and singing can do you no good, and you may rest assured these will really do you no good. Thousands there are who daily hear and chant the Lord's name, but are never converted by it, simply because they believe it cannot convert them. Say, however, that it *can* crush your sin, and it *shall* do so. There is a meaning in "can" which very few care to realize. Verily faith can remove mountains. Believe that the name of God Almighty is an almighty conquerer of sin and sorrow, and if your lips utter that sound, only once it may be, you will experience a mighty revolution in your heart. The power of faith is not, however, confined to the name of God or other sacred words, but manifests itself in a variety of ways. We are fully convinced of the truth that when the heart is prepared, salvation may be found in the commonest objects of the earth. Even in dust the believer may find the key of heaven. Nay he is sure to find it. To the unbeliever nothing discloses heaven or God ; the believer sees religion in every object. The unbeliever in vain tries all reformatory agencies, and concludes that

there is power in none to conquer his sins. The believer, on the contrary, lays his hand on every object with faith and hope, and finds the whole universe a revelation. If we are asked to say what things in our opinion are conducive to a sinner's redemption, we shall say in reply—*Every thing or nothing.* Every thing helps our spiritual growth if there is faith in us ; in the absence of faith nothing can help us. The believer gathers wisdom from rustling leaves and flowing brooks, while to the unbeliever even books, teachers and prophets deliver no saving message. To the former darkness is light ; to the latter light is darkness. All nature ministers, like a friendly hand, to the wants of the believer, and even the most untoward and discouraging circumstances, even darkness and death, reveal light and life to him. He is never in need of aids to salvation. All objects in the universe are to him "angels and ministers of grace." He says to yonder star in heaven or to that neglected and despised grain of stand in the street, "reveal to me the Great God ;" and that voice is instantly obeyed, for it is the voice of living faith. He says he will conquer lying and lust by simply taking the name of the Lord on his lips ; he cries "Lord" with the trusting heart of a child, and lo ! his sins vanish. Nay he lays his hand on a quantity of dust, and says,—*"This I shall convert into the bread of life."* Behold it is converted, and the very touch of it purifies and

ennobles his soul. Great, indeed, is the power of faith !

PASSIONATE LOVE OF GOD AND HUMANITY.

•AS worldliness is a passion so is godliness a passion. The worldly man loves the world with all the warmth and enthusiasm of passionate attachment. To him the pleasure and honors of the world are a fascination and a charm. He cannot resist the sweet spell. He runs mad after earthly treasures, and would submit to any amount of toil and sacrifice for them. He is desperately fond of the idols of the senses, and would do anything for their sake. He loses all self-control, and is not the master of his own self. He is carried away in the strong and impetuous tide of carnal enjoyments. He has sold himself completely to the world, and acts and lives as a slave at its feet. So is the godly man altogether devoted to God. He is swallowed up in an all-absorbing passion of loving devotion. His religion is not a mere duty, not a task, but a perpetual joy. He does not pray because he ought to do so, but because he feels lifeless without prayer. God is to him not merely the Lord of the universe, the Infinite Creator, but the Supreme Friend, ever near and ever dear, the Light of his eye and the Joy of his heart. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks," so does he long to behold his Father and

enjoy His company. His heart is so intensely attached to the All-merciful that His very name is dear to him. He does not argue himself into obedience and virtue. He is driven into a life of righteousness by the irresistible charms which beset it. He renounces worldly pleasure and sacrifices his highest temporal interests without the least hesitation. It is to him a pleasure and an honor to sacrifice his life for the glory of the Lord. Seized with religious frenzy, he is ever seeing, singing or serving the God of mercy who has captivated and enchanted his heart by the attractions of His love. Holy love has made him mad, and though a penniless and friendless beggar, he joyfully sings aloud his Father's name that the world may be saved by hearing it. When the heart of the believer is thus lost in the love of God, not only his devotion but his social virtues also assume the form of a fiery passion. Those who have not tasted this overwhelming passion industriously toil and struggle for the fulfilment of their duties, the subjugation of their passions and the removal of impurity and sin. They consult time and circumstances, weigh all probable consequences, reflect on "ways and means," try to reconcile jarring interests and harmonize conflicting duties, and even relax the rigor of high rules of morality to suit peculiar cases of difficulty. In fact they seek to be virtuous by constant vigilance, warfare and struggle, and the exercise of their reasoning powers. Veracity, honesty, charity,

forgiveness, humility, patience, patriotism and the domestic virtues are each sedulously cultivated, and the growth of each is the result of special endeavours and anxious self-culture. So lying, selfishness, anger, lust, pride and other vices have to be chased away one after another with the utmost care and by the employment of adequate measures in each case. The man who has made the love of God the ruling passion of his life hates and eschews such mechanical and slow processes of self-culture. With him virtue means the love of man, not the performance of a detailed routine of outward duties. He does not practise this virtue or that; he does not seek the conquest of this vice or that. He cuts the root of all social sin, and seeks the root of all social virtues. An enthusiastic love of humanity takes possession of his heart, and under its overbearing influence he devotes his mental and physical energies to the service of mankind. He feels an unbounded domestic interest in the welfare of others, and passionately loves every man as his brother and every woman as his sister. The world is his home, and human society is the family of his Father's children. His enthusiastic brotherly love kills selfishness outright. All this love is absorbed by brothers and sisters, and nothing is left for self. Self-love becomes impossible where self is completely sold and surrendered to others. "Do to others as ye would be done by" appears too mean a principle for those who

have been swallowed in a world-embracing philanthropy. Nor is outward action any measure of virtue with them. They are not satisfied with anything short of universal love in the recesses of the heart. The absence of this love is looked upon and shunned as a sin. Not to love others is wicked, however righteous outward actions may be ; to love others according to the measure of self-love is mechanical virtue ; to love others with a passionate and self-sacrificing attachment, with wild and rapturous affection, is the highest and holiest state of social morality. When such a state is attained benevolence, forgiveness and all generous sentiments become perfectly natural, and the godly soul feels the highest delight in sacrificing every thing, even life itself, for the welfare of others.

MYSTICISM.

RATIONALISM and mysticism are the Scylla and Charybdis of the soul. We must so steer the vessel of life between these two dangers that in avoiding the one we may not fall into the other. Many a soul has been wrecked for want of precaution. When one sees the danger of rationalism in his own life and realizes the mischievous effects of trusting too much to proud reason in matters of salvation, there is a strong tendency to run away too far from it and rush into mysticism. Reason is found to be a treacherous guide. It betrays the rationalist

into scepticism and killing doubts about Providence and prayer and grace. It dries up the well of pure sentiments, renders the love of God impossible, and makes religion a bundle of hard social duties. When the seeker of truth and salvation feels that he has been thus betrayed, he distrusts and rejects his guide, and tries to run to the opposite side. Having reasoned too much he now reasons too little. Having trusted too little he now comes to trust too much. He had little or no religious feeling; now he indulges in the excesses of sentimentalism. It was all demonstration then; it is all trust now. Salvation was sought in knowledge then, now sentiment is accepted as the sinner's only hope. The reaction is striking and perilous. But its evils develop themselves slowly and gradually, and insidiously ruin the soul. The feeling element grows with wild luxuriance at the expense of the other elements of religious life. In all speculations and practices it preponderates. "Nothing is accepted as true which is devoid of the sweetness and softness of pious emotions. This abnormal development of the heart issues in sentimentalism. The solid basis of reasoning having given way imagination takes its place, and instead of hard arguments, the pleasing and fascinating vagaries of fancy influence the mind. Where facts do not help and the senses cannot teach, fancy rushes in and constructs theories without any data, and conjures up the "baseless fabric of a vision." If God

cannot be seen He must be imagined into the field of vision, and pleasant dreams and reveries are preferred to dry contemplation and matter-of-fact prayer. The mystic clothes his divinity with such attributes and paints him in such colors as may gratify his own tastes and inclinations. He does not worship God as He is but as he wishes Him to be. His next life is not what faith warrants, but what he longs for and wishes to enjoy. Even his morality is divested of all practices which are repugnant to his feelings. His spiritual life is a round of ideas, beliefs, sentiments and actions which are based more upon what he imagines to be good than what is really good. In its more developed forms mysticism sinks into quietism and dreamy sentimentalism. There are many, however, who do not go to that extent, but rest satisfied with a compound of Theism and mysticism, in which upon a slender basis of fact a huge superstructure of pleasant fiction is raised. The mildest form in which mysticism manifests itself is the slight mixture of imagination with pure faith which takes place occasionally in the lives of many devout and good men. It is difficult to overcome this evil completely, as owing to its insidious nature many unconsciously succumb to it. As the right wing of the Theistic community inclines towards rationalism in doctrines and practices, so the left wing shows a tendency towards mysticism. But true Theism hates and abjures all forms of ration-

alism and mysticism. The least touch of these evils must be avoided as wrong and sinful. We have no sympathy with any forms of rationalism or mysticism. We are uncompromising advocates of truth. Let men indulge in arguments and discussions, and with the utmost earnestness cultivate theological studies, sift evidence and make inquiries ; let them read books to any extent, and study philosophy, history, science, and every branch of knowledge to perfection. But they must do so as Theists, and take care that they are not carried away by rationalism. Let their knowledge only confirm their faith. So on the other hand let all believers enjoy to the fullest extent the pleasure of devotion, prayer and communion ; let them be with God in solitude as long as they like, and draw their hearts and souls as far away from the world and as near the spirit-world as possible. But such communion must be Theistic, not pantheistic. Its basis must be laid in solid faith, and it must be altogether *real*, not in the least imaginary.

BRIEF EJACULATIONS.

OUR daily prayers supply us with strength and provisions for our pilgrimage through the world to the kingdom of heaven. But their influence does not seem to last long in the face of the adverse circumstances which beset our lives. We grow better and purer in the course of our daily devotion ; and our carnal passions and

propensities are weakened, our better sentiments are strengthened, and we receive from heaven light, wisdom, love and purity. These blessings we continue to enjoy unless and until they succumb to the superior force of the temptations and trials of the world. Sometimes we retain them for an hour only, sometimes for a whole day, according as the power we acquire through prayer is small or great. The influence of the best prayer is the longest, that of the worst is the shortest, in duration. Even our purest and highest prayers, however, do not produce a lasting effect. For the intoxicating pleasures of the senses and the dangers we meet with at every turn in the paths of the world often conquer the feeble spirit of our devotion, and deprive us of the piety and purity we may have acquired through it. If prayers make us rejoice in the morning, ere the sun sets our gladness may often be converted into sorrow and lamentation in consequence of some painful occurrence. If by earnest supplication for Divine aid we succeed in curbing anger and lust, do not these passions in consequence of pre-established habit recur subsequently and defile the heart? All this proves that our regular morning and evening prayers are not sufficiently earnest, and yield fruits only so far as they are earnest and genuine. Devotion is a mockery if it cannot influence life. Our prayers must be such as may impart lasting solidity and purity to man's entire character

instead of producing only temporary piety and fitful outbursts of rapturous devotion. The object of calling upon the Lord in the morning is that we may remember Him throughout the day. Of what avails is our morning devotion if we remain oblivious of God or prove disobedient to Him during the day? The success of our prayers depends not only upon the sincerity and earnestness with which they are offered, but the amount of godliness which characterizes the intervals. It is therefore, we believe, of the utmost importance that besides offering regular daily prayers we should now and then, in the course of the day, reverently pronounce the holy name of God, or offer short prayers, or otherwise remember Him amid the ten thousand distracting cares and occupations of the world and its numerous temptations and pleasures. Such phrases and expressions as 'May God help me!' 'Divine mercy my only treasure,' 'My God, where art Thou?' 'Bless the Saviour,' 'My God is here,' are calculated to bring the Divine presence constantly before us and sanctify our lives. These brief ejaculations have been found to do much good, and the experiences of the devout in all ages have borne testimony to the fact. The mere repetition of the Divine name, with faith and humility, has often proved a great power for conquering worldliness and sin, and establishing habits of godliness in daily life.

A THIN PARTITION.

IT is a pleasure to study and unravel the deep mysteries of the spiritual world. And as these mysteries affect our life and our practical endeavours after salvation, it is not only interesting but important and advantageous to comprehend them fully. There are certain profound secrets in the depths of the Divine economy of redemption which the struggling soul ought to know in order that he may avoid errors and blunders, adopt the right path and successfully enter the kingdom of heaven. It often happens that we fail in spite of our strength and resources simply because these are not directed into the right channel. It is not the absence of efficacious remedies but the want of accurate diagnosis that not unfrequently defeats all attempts at recovery. We may even go on repeating our errors year after year, and, as a consequence, pass through a regular series of failures till we rightly ascertain the pathology of our maladies. Pathology, both spiritual and physical, is only the science of nature's secrets ; it reveals the deep causes of abnormal irregularities and therefore clearly suggests remedial processes. Its study is essential to the successful treatment of diseases, spiritual and physical. He who wishes to be free from sin and impurity, doubt and unbelief, must know whence these evils originate, and how they may be best coped with and crushed in the very root. Most of our

spiritual difficulties and sufferings arise from a widely prevalent though unnoticed disease of the inward eye. Few know the disease or care to know it. Yet it afflicts us all, secretly and imperceptibly, with almost epidemic universality. All spiritually-minded men who, following the Socratic counsel "Know thyself," have probed the depths of their deranged constitution, and ascertained the cause of their doubt and depravity, must bear witness to the fact that there is something wrong in their spiritual vision, and that it is the root of half the sins which defile their hearts and lives. Who is there among us that does not believe in the universal presence of the Divine Spirit? And yet how few there are who vividly realize that encompassing and holy Presence? Those again who are privileged to behold the Divine Being as a near and resplendent reality fail occasionally to realize Him and feel as if they are where He is not. In the morning how they rejoiced in His company! In a few hours perhaps a change comes upon their spirits, and then for days and weeks they in vain seek the Lord. Why is it that we then felt His gladdening and sanctifying presence, almost without any effort on our part, but fail to perceive Him now in spite of our best efforts? Why is it that He was unto us light then but darkness now? There is, it seems, a thin partition between the eye and Divinity which obstructs vision. We see it not, it is so thin; yet we cannot see through it, for it is impervious

as a wall and insurmountable as a huge barrier. Actually there is nothing between the inward eye and God. His presence is immediate. But when that eye gets diseased and obfuscated it cannot perceive Him, though as near as before. One may change places and usher himself into a sacred temple, the resort of saints, or the most romantic natural scenery, he sees no God outside or inside the heart, for the unbelieving and vacant eye tells him that all is vacuum, dry and dreary. Let the eye be restored to health, let the soul through intense faith say with emphasis and earnestness—"Here He is," and all space shines in the Divine light, and He is seen everywhere. Similarly a good book which used to present deep and precious truths to the spiritual eye suddenly becomes a "sealed book," and far from imparting any saving message seems to be a mass of unintelligible sentences and ambiguous words. You saw yesterday light and salvation in every word in the Sermon on the Mount, but to-day you read it only to criticise and doubt its wisdom and scoff at its foolish utterances. Why this change? Has the Sermon undergone a metamorphosis in the interval? No; it is the eye that has been covered over with a thin cobweb-like film of doubt and impurity, and until that is removed the eye will find darkness even in the sun, and find jargon and vexation and death in words of love, joy and life. This eye-disease ought to engage our most serious consideration and we should adopt pro-

per and timely measures to remedy it. Much of the evil we suffer from is not in the outward object but in the inward eye. The enemy that most disturbs and defiles us is subjective not objective.

THE INNER WORLD.

MEDITATION is one of the most important elements of worship, and ought to have a place in every form of Divine service. Devotion, whether private or public, is incomplete without it. Humanity demands it, and cannot dispense with it without neglecting one side of its spiritual nature. Worship to be natural and profitable, must supply all the wants and meet all the cravings of the soul. It should embrace adoration, prayer, thanksgiving, meditation and hymns, for these are all needful to the soul, and meet its varied requirements. We cannot omit any of these elements of true devotion. It is to be regretted that while the others are recognised and adopted, meditation is generally neglected, and its necessity denied. We think it is of the highest importance that a few minutes should be set apart for silent meditation. During this short time absolute silence must prevail, all eyes must close, and every individual worshipper realize and adore the Unseen Spirit in the depths of the heart. In all other parts of Divine service the congregation join together and follow the minister. During

meditation every thing of a congregational character is dispensed with, all outward objects disappear, the minister and the pulpit are forgotten, and so are all the brethren assembled in the house of worship. All external sights vanish, and all external sounds are hushed. Every individual is left to himself and to his God. The profound stillness of solitude is felt and realized in the midst of a numerous congregation. The solitary temple of the heart takes the place of the outward tabernacle. Instead of "*our* Father," the soul contemplates and adore "*my* Father." What it does none can see, what it says none can hear except the Omniscient and Indwelling Spirit. "Alone to the Alone" is the creed of the meditating soul. It must be admitted that to many the closing of the eye is but darkness, and solitude is dreary and cheerless. He who is not spiritually-minded and has not been trained or habituated to solitary contemplation or communion with invisible realities, must feel himself lost in inner darkness if he tries to draw himself away from the objects of the senses. But let him persevere with faith and prayer, and he will see light in the midst of darkness. Nay, meditation will be to him a source of the highest and purest joy. It will open up a new world in the recesses of the heart, full of the beauty of the Lord's presence. There the human spirit and the Divine Spirit dwell together in intercommunion, and the true and lasting *yoga* which the worshipper earnestly

longs for as his heaven is realised. When by means of meditation and communion the God of Love is realized within, His holy and serene light bursts upon the eye of faith, and the heart of the believer is converted into a romantic garden, where love and gratitude and trust bloom like beautiful and fragrant flowers, and devotion flows like a gentle stream. The whole spectacle is charming, and far more alluring than anything in the outward world.

CRUCIFIXION.

WE value the crucifixion of Christ not so much as a glorious fact in his life but as a moral fact of eternal and universal significance. It has a deep typical meaning. Though personal and historical, it covers a high moral principle applicable to all nations and all ages. In "him crucified" we see the crucifixion of humanity. If the cross has any meaning it is this, that every man and every woman should nail the carnal nature on the invisible cross of self-sacrifice. None is accepted in heaven as the son of God except such as are thus nailed and crucified. Unless the old man bleeds to death, there is no admission into the kingdom of God. Those who retain their carnal life and only try to curb it by prayer and self-control, may become good and virtuous men in the world, but they are not fit for heaven. That life must be fully extinguished and the heart of flesh must altogether

cease to beat before man is accepted by God. Salvation is nothing but regeneration,—a new spiritual life springing from the ashes of the old carnal nature. Whether we are saved or not, is a problem which the application of mere doctrinal tests will not and cannot solve. No creed, excellent it may be,—Hindu, Christian, Mahomedan or Brahmo,—can serve as a passport into the kingdom of heaven. The chief question upon which our destiny hangs, is not what we believe, but whether we have been crucified. The one thing needful is the death of our animal nature. Men may believe in the highest and purest doctrine of redemption and put their trust in prophets, saints and scriptures, no amount of doctrinal purity will avail to give them a place among the 'saved.' Before the Lord's judgment seat we shall not be asked whether we bear the Christian or the Hindu name, whether the prophet we recognise is he of Nazareth or he of Nuddea, whether our faith rests on the authority of the Bible or the Vedas, but whether we have entirely subdued our animal passions and propensities. Neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision anything; neither has baptism any merit, nor has *upanayan*, but new life is all in all. Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. True baptism is the washing away of the carnal nature with the waters of grace. The true *dwija* (twice-born) is he who is born again in spirit. Have we all been baptized? Are we

all *dwijas*? Certainly not. The holiest and best men among the Hindus, Christians, Mahomedans and Brahmos, must answer in the negative. The animal nature still lurks even in the best regulated heart. What do we mean by the death of the flesh? Anger, lust, avarice, selfishness, envy, jealousy, pride, and all evil propensities must be so thoroughly subdued as to render their action absolutely impossible. There are many who always strive to keep the flesh under control, and are ever trying to conquer their carnal passions. Impure thoughts and inclinations may be effectively curbed for a time, but they recur so soon as temptations come in the way and call them forth. How often we fancy that the old man is dead when he is only sleeping and waiting for fresh opportunities to rise again. Our old vices are like periodical fits that come again and again, though checked for the time by discipline and self-government. We all feel this is painfully true. For who is there among us who is not troubled with such fits? We may have succeeded in turning away from sinful *deeds*. Our actions may be pure, our hands clean. By means of constant training and discipline, prayer and devotion, we may have attained outward purity of character. But impurity still dwells in our hearts. Our thoughts and feelings and wishes are not altogether clean. We may be free from foul deeds, but from foul desires we are not free. Some men are under the bondage of anger ;

some are frequently troubled with lustful thoughts ; some cannot chase away selfish wishes ; some are victims of avarice ; some are proud and envious. In some form or other our hearts have been captivated by the charms of sin, and we all feel we cannot easily get rid of our favorite vices. Though we rise, we fall again, and again. We come away from one class of vices, but we yield to another. We boast of our freedom from the yoke of one passion, but lo ! another passion rules our hearts with iron sway, and perhaps a baser passion it is. Let us candidly confess then that our carnal nature has not been conquered or crucified, but lingers in us still with all its hideousness and enormity,—occasionally checked but not altogether destroyed. And let such confession be accompanied by humble prayers and earnest efforts for remedying the evil. The chief object of our daily life, our struggles and endeavours should be to eradicate sin and destroy the very root of evil. We should never rest satisfied with temporary triumphs over our vicious habits. Let us not rejoice if anger or lust has been overcome for the time only. With earnest prayer and in God's name let us lay the axe at the root of our carnal nature. We must die unto the world and sin, and live in holiness and God. Impure thoughts and inclinations must become impossible. To this lofty aim let all our struggles and efforts, our aspirations and prayers, be directed. Let the sinful heart kneel before the Lord and inces-

santly pray for the glory and blessedness of crucifixion and new life.

PRAYER FOR PHYSICAL BENEFITS.

WHY do we object to prayer for physical blessings? Because the law of prayer does not fully apply to them. We cannot be blind to the fact that thousands and tens of thousands of devout men and women among Christians and Hindus pray for rain and harvest, for health, life and comfort. Nor are we prepared to deny that they do so sometimes from the highest and most unselfish motives, and with an amount of sincerity and earnestness truly remarkable. Such prayers are as natural and spontaneous as those for spiritual benefits, and though they relate to things of this world they do not necessarily proceed from worldly motives or carnal inclinations. All this we are ready to admit. The men who pray for physical benefits as well as the prayers that are offered may be of the highest and most unimpeachable order. Yet the law of prayer and the conditions under which it is granted do not hold in such cases. We shall prove this presently. A prayer in order to be successful must be offered with the utmost confidence and with the strongest assurance that it shall be granted in heaven. The slightest doubt is sure to interfere with its success. The prayers of unbelieving lips are not accepted by God. If you pray for rain you must be thoroughly

assured that your prayers will call down rain from above. There must not be the least misgiving in the heart. The soul that prays ought to be able to say—"it *must* rain," not "it *may* rain." But no man can pray with such confidence for rain or any other physical benefit. The most devout generally supplement such prayers with a proviso that they may be fulfilled *if* conformable to the Divine will, not otherwise. In other words while praying for rain they take care to add—"May Thy will be done!" thereby implying a doubt that a shower of rain at the time may or may not be agreeable to Divine economy. When a father prays for the recovery of his dying son he holds himself ready for the worst that may happen, for he is not sure that the child will recover under the influence of his prayer, and even goes to the extent of fearing that death may happen in spite of it, and therefore learns resignation to the Divine will as death draws near. There can be no true prayer unless it is accompanied by the most perfect conviction that what is prayed for must come to pass. Such is the case in all prayers for spiritual blessings—for faith, love, purity, zeal, hope and new life. These are sure to be answered if sincere, for it has been said—"Ask and it *shall* be given." Not a single prayer for salvation was ever rejected, none will ever be. But millions of prayers for harvest and good weather, for health and wealth, have found no response in heaven. There is another argument which is

also of great importance. Whether the things of the world we seek are likely to prove a blessing or a curse none knows save Heaven. They are certainly desirable ; men wish for them. But are they desirable from a moral point of view, as conducive to the soul's welfare and consistent with its eternal interests ? Who knows that disease and death, drought and scarcity may not prove blessings in the end ? Have not the worst calamities often done our souls good ? The believer ought to say with reference to all material comforts and benefits—"Not my will, but Thine be done."

PAST SINS.

WHILE other systems of theology attempt to solve the problem how "past sin" may be atoned for, pure Theism looks only to the eradication of present sin and the prevention of future sin. The cause of this difference may be found in the more accurate notions of sin and moral retribution and the more philosophical analysis of human nature which underlie the scheme of Theistic redemption. We have learnt to believe that to fight with "past sin" is to fight with a shadow, for such a thing does not really exist, and is altogether an imaginary evil. All creeds and all men err that spend powder and shot upon this phantom-like foe. The whole battle is a comedy of errors. *Past* sin means literally a sin that is past and not present. If it is altogether

an event of the past then it is dead and gone, and does not exist now. Why shall we stultify ourselves by attempting to kill that which is dead already, to atone for an evil which is nowhere to be found? Let us suppose a man has committed a murder through excessive anger or envy. His real guilt is not the act of murder, which is a past occurrence, but the anger or envy which led to it, and may be still present in the mind as a vicious propensity, though it may no longer manifest itself in action. Words and actions are not in themselves right or wrong. It is the will that is righteous or wicked. If a man's heart is corrupt and cherishes impure desires he is guilty before the Holy God, though there may be no uncleanness in outward life. He may have ceased to commit murder, robbery, theft, adultery and other outward crimes for some time. In the eye of God his sins are not past but present. His all-searching eye sees that the evil propensities and inclinations from which those crimes originated are still present in the sinner's heart, and only need favorable opportunities to call them forth. They are asleep and inactive, not dead. They rise and work mischief as soon as temptations come in their way and stir them up. Our lives bear testimony to this truth. How often do we find that our corrupt propensities though apparently subdued are not really gone, and that our cherished vices though not manifested in the shape of external deeds still cling to the heart?

There is no glory and there can be no consolation in the fact that we have ceased to rob and steal and murder. So long as our wicked desires are not eradicated we are sinners. The question we have to solve, if we are sincerely anxious for our salvation, is not whether outward vices and crimes are past and gone, but whether the vicious propensity, the criminal will is a present fact of life. That is reckoned a "past sin" which has been plucked out, root and branch, from the depths of the heart. True salvation means the emancipation of the human soul not only from outward vices but also from carnal propensities,—the annihilation of every evil desire and the very liability to temptation and sin. The Theistic believer aims at such salvation. He struggles daily with the lusts of the flesh and with sinful thoughts, and seeks such complete victory over them as would make impurity impossible even in thought. Through the redeeming grace of the Merciful Lord he daily achieves success, and draws nearer and nearer in spirit to the kingdom of heaven, where all is purity and joy.

THE GOLDEN RULE.

THE ethical principle of doing unto others as we would that they should do to us has come down to us from ancient times, and is supported by the consentient testimony of all scriptures and prophets. It is a simple and axiomatic truth

which the world has always accepted and tried to follow as "The Golden Rule." The Hindu scriptures inculcate the doctrine in these words—*Atmavat sarva bhutesu*. The parallel passage in the Bible runs thus—"Love thy neighbour as thyself." We must respectfully bow before the wisdom of these ancient texts, and gratefully acknowledge the value of the ethical rule which Hindus and Christians have alike adopted for the regulation of their social dealings and conduct. But we feel bound to say that this rule does not appear to us to be the highest law of social morality, and that we believe there is a higher law still. When man casts away selfishness and loves and serves every body else as himself, when he takes as much interest in the welfare of others as he does in his own happiness, there can be no doubt he has attained a very high stage of moral and religious culture. But he has not, we contend, attained the highest point. According to the golden rule self-love is the standard and measure of all social virtues. It tells us,—as is our love for self so must our love for others be; all that we do for our own benefit we must do also for our neighbours. It calls upon all men and women to render generous services to each other up to the extent to which they serve themselves,—no more. But why no more? Why should we not serve our neighbours more than ourselves? Why should not the love that goes out exceed the

love which one feels for self? We do not see any reason why charity should not outrun and transcend self-love. Every body in this world of ours loves himself, however virtuous or vicious he may be. This self-love, far from being a heavenly impulse or an honorable virtue, is a common worldly instinct to which few are disposed to give credit. Should worldly moralists try to regulate our conduct towards each other by the standard of self-love, and call upon us to do as we would be done by, we would not question the expediency of such teaching or undervalue in the least its wholesome practical effects on society at large. But the divine ethics of Theism scorns this low standard and demands a higher order of virtue than that which looks to self-love as its only measure and guide. It requires that more should be done for others than for self, and that in the enthusiastic love of humanity self should be altogether forgotten and ignored. The golden rule based on self-love is gold indeed, but self-sacrifice is a jewel. The former is worldly morality; but total self-abnegation is salvation. In the higher stages of spiritual growth man learns and cultivates that passionate love for God and His children which crushes self and extinguishes every spark not only of selfishness but of self-love also. In fact his only ambition then is to deny self. If so, how can he control and regulate his dealings with others by an attachment towards that self which has been denied and sacrificed? A

self-denying martyr sacrifices self and all his temporal interests for the benefit of society. He loves God's family more than himself. His self-love may be a small lake, but his charity, which is endless and unfathomable as the vast Pacific, swallows it. He is anxious for the wealth and bodily comfort of others, but not for his own. He is busy in making every body prosperous and happy in the world while he himself pines. He guards the reputation of others while his own is slandered and traduced. He imparts life to the world by unhesitatingly sacrificing his own life. He so loves others that, like Christ Jesus, he dies for them and reforms them with his own blood. He is indeed above the low morality of self-love.

HOW GOD PUNISHES BELIEVERS.

GOD so loves us that he even chastises us with sweet love. We perceive His ordinary mercy when He feeds us and clothes us and supplies our daily wants. His special mercy is manifest in those unusual and rare dispensations through which He strikingly helps us out of spiritual emergencies and crises. But the real depth and beauty of Divine love are nowhere so perceptible as in the punitive economy of heaven. It is not when the Father feeds us but when He punishes us that His love is most vividly manifested and felt. We measure His love not merely by the value of His gifts or the useful-

ness of His dispensations, but also by the amount of our own unworthiness. The more unworthy we are of His fatherly kindness the more intensely do we realize it. Each offence, each act of disobedience on our part enhances proportionately the value of His mercy. We may feel entitled to favour if we are righteous and pure. But conscious unworthiness and wickedness kill all expectations of favour, and excite in us a dread of deserved punishment. Such, however, is God's love that even when we have offended and transgressed His sacred law and evoked the severest condemnation from His high tribunal of justice He deals with us mercifully. Even when He rebukes and punishes sinners He is full of tender love. Our sins cause no diminution in His infinite mercy. He is above vindictiveness and hatred. Not all the iniquities and transgressions of this wicked world can, for one moment, ruffle the tranquil temper of the All-merciful. An angry divinity is a myth. The true God knoweth no anger. There is love in heaven for the grossest sinner, and though he is punished he is punished mercifully by a kind Father, not vindictively by a wrathful deity. How great that love which can love a desperate and confirmed sinner and feed and clothe the worst foe! How sweet and unfathomable that mercy which while executing the sternest demands of justice upon the sinner displays only its overflowing tenderness! To every believing soul this truth is most encouraging

and cheering. A more gratifying message never came down from heaven than the fact that God does not seek the destruction of the sinner in an angry spirit, but lovingly punishes him for the sake of his salvation. The believer rejoices in tracing the hand of the Father in all His dispensations. Even in the deepest agony of the sinful soul he perceives the working of infinite love. In our spiritual life there are seasons of joy and sorrow, hope and fear, rest and struggle, light and darkness; there are bright days and gloomy nights. The nights are the inevitable penalty due to sin. To men of little faith they are an unmingled evil and a destructive scourge; and they often prove in their lives the precursor of degradation and death. Many there are who succumb to trials and difficulties; and lose not only purity and faith but hope also, and at last die in scepticism and sin. But the true believer sees the infliction of just punishment in all the trials of his soul, and knows that the very same hand that sends days sends nights also. If he feels that his heart is dry and dreary, his prayers hard and hypocritical and his life dull and torpid, he vividly realizes the chastening rod of heaven in the midst of his degradation. His trials and sorrows are the inevitable and necessary consequences of his sins, and he recognises and accepts them as the punishment due to those sins. He does not lose heart, for he has learnt to trust the hand that punishes him. It is the hand of his Merciful

Father. If he cannot see and enjoy his Father's benignant face, he believes that face has been mercifully veiled, in order to discipline his heart with sorrow, and awaken in it a deeper longing for true prayer and communion. Accordingly he bears all his present difficulties and sufferings with child-like trust, and hopefully undergoes the discipline till the dark clouds overhanging his soul disappear and it re-enters the Lord's presence with renewed life and love. Then his faith in the truth that all spiritual agony is remedial and that He whose shafts torment the soul is a kind Father, is intensified and aggravated a hundredfold, and he learns to love Him the more. There is yet a higher standpoint from which God's punitive love may be viewed. When faith in Divine mercy becomes deeper and sweeter in the course of development that mercy itself appears to the believer to be the severest punishment for his sins. If he has done any thing wrong or cherished an impure thought the very contemplation of the Father's love will prove a discipline and a chastisement, and have the effect of purifying the heart. No further punishment will be needed. As soon as he is ushered into the presence of the loving Father and sees His face, he will read a lesson of rebuke and admonition in that face sufficient to check his evil propensities and deepen his faith and piety. When the Lord says to the devout worshipper with a tender voice,—“See how I still love thee, disobedient child, in spite of thy

sins," these words fall upon him with a thrilling and mollifying effect, and he is subdued and saved, for he feels he cannot resist such love. One loving glance of the Divine eye is enough to punish and chasten true believers. They look above, and as soon as their impure eyes come in contact with the light of the Father's eyes, their heads bend down in shame under the weight of conscious sin, and they say,—“Enough, Lord, that benignant look is enough for the refractory soul.” Verily the exalted soul of the believer needs but a loving glance from above to purify him. God's love is to him the highest punishment and the purest joy.

RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE.

TELL those that are married to marry again and again. Of course we do not mean by this bigamy or polygamy. We are uncompromising haters of these evils. We look upon many marriages as an unmitigated curse. Polygamy is a gigantic moral, social and domestic evil, against which humanity rebels. What we mean to assert is that husbands and wives ought to renew their matrimonial engagements again and again. The marriage tie is at present tied only once in life ; we believe it ought to be fastened more and more tightly from time to time, so that the knot may prove a lasting and enduring union and ripen into a heavenly friendship. We confess we do not entertain a very high idea of

earthly marriages. They may be good so far as they go ; they may be said to serve the objects which the world recognises as the end and aim of married life. But we judge them by a higher standard, and there is no doubt that when they are so judged, they are found wanting in many of the higher elements of the true conjugal state. The day when man and woman accept each other as husband and wife is important only as marking the commencement of conjugal life. Wedding is marriage begun, not marriage perfected. The duties of married life extend over a whole lifetime, and are not the concern of a single day. They are undertaken in a minute, but their fulfilment must take years to complete. Husbands and wives are woefully mistaken and deluded if they think they have achieved their high mission by simply going through the prescribed rite of marriage. They ought to believe that their real conjugal union is yet to be accomplished, that their true marriage is before, not behind. Their earthly marriage has been solemnized ; their heavenly marriage is yet to take place. Their carnal attachment must be perfected into a pure spiritual friendship. They ought, therefore, to employ such means constantly and systematically as may enable them to form this perfect union. The best and most effective means in our opinion is the occasional renewal of the matrimonial contract in the presence of the Holy God, accompanied by earnest prayers for His guid-

ance and aid. Who can deny that the temptations, difficulties and trials of this world are calculated to make the married couple forget their higher relations and duties to each other, and gradually sink to the low level of worldly relationship? It is, therefore, necessary that they should be occasionally reminded of the nature and responsibilities of true spiritual marriage, and drawn away gradually from all the fascinations and evils of worldly marriage. It appears to us that they will best achieve this high purpose if they now and then sit before the family altar, and in the holy presence of Him who first united them, strengthen, purify and sweeten the bonds of mutual love. The process should be repeated as often as there is a practical tendency to forget and violate the duties of marriage, and husbands and wives are threatened with worldliness and sin. Whenever they feel that they are running away from the kingdom of heavenly love, they ought to draw near to the Source of Love, and under His holy inspiration purify their relations. Thus true spiritual love will grow in their midst, and by a constant renewal of their vows and prayers before God, they will realize that true spiritual unity which is at once the essence, the beauty and the joy of married life.

THEY WENT TO THE MOUNTAINS TO PRAY.

MAHARSHI JESU, so says the Gospel, "departed into a mountain to pray." The *rishis* and *yogis* of ancient India too, we are told, used to repair to the heights of the sacred Himalayas for solitary prayer and communion. For the benefit of our souls we would do well to follow such noble examples. It is a good thing to leave behind occasionally the activities, cares and temptations of the world, and enter into undisturbed communion with the Supreme Spirit in some lonely mountain retreat. The soul requires constant training and discipline to keep it from the corrupting influences of the world. Sometimes ordinary means fail and special agencies are needed to prevent and remedy sin. A protracted residence in the midst of the vitiated atmosphere of the world and hourly struggles with its temptations are sometimes found so to enervate and paralyze the soul that a change of place seems indispensable. This principle applies equally to our physical and spiritual constitution. When men suffer from chronic maladies of a desperate character or from extreme poverty of blood, they are considered to be beyond the reach of mere medical dispensations, and are recommended to seek health in a "change of air." We all know that many an invalid whose recovery was almost hopeless has found new life by simply inhaling the

fresh air of a better and more salubrious place. Many also have found an efficacious preventive of disease and death in the wholesome habit of occasionally visiting healthy stations and breathing pure air. The weak and diseased soul similarly benefits by turning away completely from impure scenes and associations, and renewing its health and strength in an altogether new land and fresh atmosphere. Reading, good company, church-going, counsel, self-control, and other appointed remedies are all beneficial so far as they go, and ought to be employed by us for our salvation. But there are times and seasons in our lives when we all need a more radical and constitutional remedy, when the soul ought to be entirely removed from impure influences and translated to regions where its very life-blood may be revolutionized and purified. What place is there on earth better adapted for this purpose than a quiet and retired spot on some high hill or mountain? Far away from the bustle and traffic of the world, and above all its cares and temptations, there the soul naturally realizes a corresponding elevation and retirement within, and breathes a new and almost heavenly atmosphere. The scenery on all sides is sublime. Hills upon hills, mountains upon mountains, above the highest a higher still, all aspiring to kiss the heavens above ;—what can be grander? Trees, tall and majestic, of varied species, cover the heights and depths, and here and there flowers of rare beauty peep out to en-

hance the beauty of the wildly romantic scene. All is still as death except where the jocund birds chirp and sing, or the solemn rush of a distant water-fall is heard. No human eye is near to see, no human ear to hear what transpires. There is no fear of the presence of any disturbing element. The soul is alone, and realizes absolute solitude. Divinity reigns in the midst of this profound and solemn stillness, and is manifest in all objects. Whether the eyes are open or closed, the soul naturally glides into quiet communion with the omnipresent and presiding Deity of the mountains. No effort is needed to offer a prayer or indulge in meditation ; the highest and most solemn devotion becomes natural and easy. The soul may be said to dwell in the land of meditation and prayer, and all nature helps it to become a *rishi*. Such a place is indeed "heaven upon earth." And we can well understand the reasons why our venerable ancestors pointed to the snow-clad summit of the Himalayas as their *swarga*. It is perhaps superfluous to remark after what we have said above that we deem it highly desirable for all spiritually-minded Theists, whenever possible and convenient, to go and spend a few days or weeks in prayer and devotion in some lonely place on the hills. A band of Brahmo pilgrims have lately gone up the Himalayas for this purpose. Their object is simply to invigorate and purify their soul by means of solitary devotion, and enter into sweet

and lasting communion with the Loving Father. No worldly motive has led them thither. They have not proceeded in search of gold or silver, but they have left home, family and friends to seek the treasures of faith, love and purity. They have gone to see the Lord's glory and beauty in His heavenly mansions on mountain tops. They have gone to worship Him in solitude whom they have long adored in the midst of family and friends. They are lodged in a quiet and romantic place from where they command a splendid view of a long range of heights covered with eternal snow. In the morning they all go away in different directions for prayer and meditation. Each sits alone in a separate place, under some shady tree, and seeks the Lord in the inner chambers of the heart. It is interesting to see them thus engaged in profound meditation and devotion. Now and then they pray and sing together, and realize the blessings of spiritual fellowship. On one occasion they went down to a retired spot in the glen below, and sitting beside a waterfall chanted together the name of the Merciful God, and had a most enthusiastic and delightful service. The worshippers rejoiced greatly, and the mountains rang with the solemn sound of *Brahma kripa hi kevalam*—Divine mercy alone. We hope similar bands of Brahmo devotees will now and then go on pilgrimage to the Himalayas, the Nilgiris, the Vindhyagiris and other high mountains in India for the elevation and sanctification of their souls.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT SERVE.

IF there are men who while professing to love God do not practically follow His behests, there are those who pretend to love man and are yet unmindful of their duties to society. In both cases there is a kind of sentimentalism which indulges in mere emotional impulses but avoids action. True love, however, means service as well as sentiment. He does not love God who transgresses His will. Nor does that man truly love his brother whose mind is a prey to envy, jealousy, pride, anger and selfishness. Unbrotherliness should be eschewed in both its forms—hard-heartedness, which is negative and springs from indifference and selfishness, and positive antagonism which seeks to injure the interests of a brother. Many of those who have escaped the former and have learnt to cultivate the feelings of love and respect for their neighbours are yet found to be sinning against each other under the impulses of base passions. It is easier to love one with the heart than to give him the loving allegiance of the entire life. It is easier to say "Brother, brother, I love thee," than to serve him faithfully. True brotherhood denotes mutual servitude. In God's family the brother is also a servant. Love is sweet, but service hard. For in serving others we find all our evil propensities in the way. They must be wholly overcome before we can discharge our duties faithfully to each other.

We must fail to adjust our mutual relations so long as we are jealous of each other's prosperity and privileges, unforgiving towards offending neighbours, cruel, vindictive or scornful. It is these passions which prevent the construction of the house of God and the establishment of domestic unity among His children. Our fraternal love is too delicate and soft to stand in the hour of trial ; it must succumb to the force of contrary passions. We may exchange the most ardent sympathies and the kindest regards with each other when there is no temptation in the way, but our love is converted into hate and our sympathy into antipathy as soon as our neighbours excite our envy or bitterness. When we are in the Temple, worshipping our common Father, we naturally feel that we are one united family, and the mere sight of the congregation excites the deepest sentiment of brotherly love. But when we go out of the house of worship into the wide world, and meet each other for ' business,' either in connection with temporal or ostensibly religious duties, we feel there are ten thousand causes of irritation which tend to pull us away from those whom we loved so intensely erewhile. Some of our brethren wound our pride by doing something which shows their superiority ; others insult us and thereby provoke our anger ; others jeopardize our worldly interests, and our selfishness seeks to resent the attack. It is in such circumstances that brotherly love is tested. If we

cannot love others under adverse influences and in the face of irritation we are not worthy of the name Brother. Heavy responsibilities attach to the position of a brother. He is bound to serve the Lord's family ; he is a servant unto the low-est and the poorest children of that family. He must serve, not according to his own will, not only where service is pleasant and agree-able, but according to the strict rules of duty, and even where subjection means the sacrifice of pride and selfishness and complete humiliation. It is not proud and patronizing love with which the kingdom of heaven is upbuilt, but meek and humble love such as the servant cherishes for his master. In our mutual relations as brethren we are apt to forget the relations of servant and master in which we all stand to each other. Even where others respect and honor us, we are but humble servants, for none is exalted but he who abaseth himself. Let us believe that we are born and destined to serve society, and that our highest glory is in meek-ness, simplicity and humility. Not in ruling others as masters but in serving others as their servants lies true manhood. Let us direct our ambition and aspirations to humble submission, not to proud authority. He is accepted by the Lord who sits at the feet of his brethren ; not he who arrogantly waves the sceptre of power over the heads of his inferiors. There is pleasure too, heavenly delight, in the position of the brother-servant sitting at the feet of the brother-

master. To serve others may be hard in the beginning, when passions interfere ; but becomes daily more and more delightful, as duty and desire harmonize. Blessed are they that serve the Lord's family in a meek and humble spirit !



